

000 Satellite Agriculture
in Crisis

*A Study of Land Policy
in the Soviet Sphere*

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FREDERICK A. PRAEGER
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ERRATA

Page 27, line 23. Correct to read as follows: "For the Serbian and Bulgarian peasantry social emancipation took a different course, since the feudal system in the true sense of the word was never a part of the Ottoman tradition. Peasant liberation followed the progressive limitation of the exactions of Turkish overlords. In Bulgaria the power of the Turkish *spahis* was broken early in the 16th century."

Page 29, line 6. For *reigns* read *reins*.

Page 35, Chart IV. Add to footnote: "Area distribution for Poland is for 1921. (Moore, p. 82)."

Page 38, Table 3. Column 4: for 12.9 read 11.9.

" 0.2 " 0.002.

" 0.0 " 0.00004.

Column 5: for 12.4 read 13.3.

Add to footnote: "Due to rounding off of figures in source, column 4 totals 99.8 per cent."

Page 39, Table 4: For 1935 read 1931.**

" 1946 " 1949.

Column 4: for 12.6 read 11.6.

Column 5: for 26.6 read 27.1.

" 38.8 " 38.3.

Add footnote: "** Area is for 1921, the only statistics available. 'Since the latter figure represents the situation before the agrarian reform, the [present] concentration of large holdings is . . . certainly smaller.' (Moore, p. 83)."

Page 66, Chart VIII. For *Slovenia* read *Slovensko*.

Page 76, Table 16. Title reads, *Economic Origins of Collectivized Peasantry*.

For *Farm Unit* read *Category of Former Holdings (in ha.)*

For *Percent of Farms Collectivized* read *Percent of Total Collectivized Families*.

Page 78, Table 17. For 6,908 read 5,908.

" -86 " -1,086.

Page 105, Chart XIV. In Percent of Arable Land (kulaks) for 11 read 11.1.

In Percent of Marketed Grain (State Farms) for 7 read 17.

5: Free Europe Committee U-4 (no date) 1954 E1 Europe E1

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PREFACE

N. S. Khrushchev's speech of September 3, 1953, in which the 121
dismal state of Soviet agriculture was first acknowledged by a
top Soviet leader, and the splurge of agricultural concessions offered
by Soviet and Satellite governments in the ensuing months, have
focused widespread attention in the Western World on the question
of the viability of the Communist agricultural system.

Many Western observers have long been convinced that the
nature of Soviet economic growth prohibits the development of a
healthy agriculture. The present desperate efforts to create some
order in the economic disarray revealed by Khrushchev and others
have only confirmed the harshest judgments of these observers: It
seemed appropriate, therefore, that at the same time as the Com-
munist leaders were engaged in a revaluation of agricultural policy
that a serious effort be made — on this side of the Iron Curtain —
to assess the nature of the current crisis and the agricultural system
that produced it.

• • •

This study is primarily concerned with the agricultural struc-
ture of the East European Satellites of the Soviet Union, and with
the efforts those Satellite regimes have made to transplant the
developed Soviet agricultural system to new terrain.

The basic characteristics of the land system which the Soviet
planners devised and put into practice during the first Five Year
Plan are taken up in order to set the background for the Satellite
efforts to duplicate the Soviet model in the 1948-53 period. This
new type of land structure is treated not merely as the expression
of a specific ideology, but as part of a set of economic relations
upon which the Communist State and industrial machine rests. In
other words, collectivized agriculture is not only a Marxist dogma,
but a functioning economic system which in the quarter century of
its existence has performed considerable services for its Communist
masters. The fact that collectivized agriculture was imposed by
force, is held together only by the most vigilant and brutal police

- 12) action, and is based upon a general decline in living standards for both workers and peasants, should not obscure the fact that the modern Soviet political and economic system would be impossible without it.

The success which the Soviet agricultural apparatus has achieved in increasing the State's share of the total agricultural produce is considered one of the keys to the endurance of this apparatus and the continued Communist reliance upon it.

The study then proceeds to describe the East European agricultural "revolution," and examines particularly those aspects which distinguished it from the Russian Revolution. The attempt to duplicate the Soviet land structure is explored with these important distinguishing characteristics in mind. The same criteria by which the Soviet system was measured are applied to the East European agricultural system — the degree of increased peasant exploitation — and comparisons are made which indicate why Soviet collectivization was so much more successful than its Eastern Europe counterpart.

The study ends with an examination of the present agricultural crisis. The problems involved are no longer merely tactical, but have become increasingly institutional. The agricultural system which the Communists imposed upon the population has now begun to impose itself upon the Communists. Its internal mechanism exercises considerable force of its own, and the New Course which engulfed the Communist world after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 is analyzed in these terms.

. . .

The antagonism between town and country described in this paper has not been confined to the history of industrialization in the Communist countries. The capacity of dynamic urban forces to manipulate the market to the detriment of the less-organized peasantry is a part of the story of industrialization of nearly every modern nation.

But this study describes an area of the world where this antagonism has been raised to the highest pitch by political regimes of unprecedented authority and brutality. The complete political disenfranchisement of the peasantry has resulted in a degree of exploitation hardly equalled in modern times.

This extraordinary economic feat has been made possible partly by the degree to which the Communist regimes have been able to

exploit the working classes under whose banners they took power, (2) and whose enforced sacrifice of purchasing power has made Communist industrialization programs economically feasible.

The success of the Communist economic program then is largely a reflection of the ability of the Communist dictatorship to exploit *all* of the oppressed classes to a degree hitherto considered impossible. But this success, as Stalin's successors have discovered, is a very fragile thing, requiring constant care and protection from those millions whose forced sacrifices made it possible.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

229 1. *Marxist-Leninist Theory to the Eve of the Russian Revolution (1848-1917)*

In the little over a century that has passed since the proclamation of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848, the attitude of Marxists toward the peasant and his role in society has undergone a series of marked shifts, ranging from Engels' caustic assertion that the peasant was the "barbarian of civilization" to Mao Tse-tung's frank reliance on a predominantly peasant army for the conquest of China.¹ Marx's own estimate of the socialist potential of the Russian *obshchina* (the traditional peasant commune) changed considerably in the last years of his life.² Lenin's well-known division of the peasantry into distinct and antagonistic segments stemmed from a more optimistic appraisal of the revolutionary role of the peasantry than had hitherto been accepted by Marxist theoreticians, and resulted after 1905 in the advocacy of a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants."³ And although Lenin was always eloquent after the 1917 Revolution on the "error" of applying force to the middle peasantry, he set in motion the ponderous social machinery whose very life eventually depended upon the most forceful manipulation of the middle peasantry. The traditional Marxist glorification of urban, cosmopolitan values (so especially pronounced in a man like Trotsky) contrasts sharply with the more

¹ For an excellent discussion of the ideological gymnastics by which Mao justified his turn from a proletarian to a peasant base in the early 1930's, see Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 113-125.

² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe*, (Blackstock and Hozelitz, editors), Glencoe, Illinois, 1952, pp. 218-26.

³ The classic exposition of Lenin's thesis is contained in his "The Agrarian Question in Russia at the End of the 19th Century," in *Selected Works* (International Publishers, New York, 1943), Vol. 1, pp. 13-94.

829 recent Communist policy of deriding "cosmopolitan" culture and cynically glorifying the folk and the land.⁴

This variegated and complex pattern of views indicates some of the pitfalls involved in an effort to generalize on Marxist agricultural theories. The great doctrinal flexibility implied in this pattern makes it imperative that Communist land policy be studied in the context of particular situations, for these variations reflect not merely tactical shifts but the changing character of Communism itself. This is not to suggest that Communist agrarian doctrine lacks a thread of historical continuity. It is to be found in the consistent conviction that the land problem is secondary to the basic urban and industrial developments in society. This attitude derives from the fact that the Communist Parties have always been urban in character, concerned with the advancement of urban groups, first the industrial proletariat, and then, in post-revolutionary times, the Party-industrial bureaucracy.⁵ Consequently, Marxist solutions to the agrarian problem have been shaped largely by needs of the urban group to which the Communists attached themselves, not by the needs of the peasants or of the land. Within this general social framework the various Marxist formulations on the land question were enunciated over the years.

THE TRADITIONAL 19TH CENTURY MARXIST VIEW

When Engels termed the peasant the "barbarian of civilization," Marx himself cited the epithet with approval; and in his own words he was more contemptuous still, terming the peasantry a "sack of potatoes," a class whose very way of life constituted a brake on human progress, and whose lack of social cohesion and drive made them incapable of forceful political action and vulnerable to reactionary ideologies.⁶ Marx's greatest scorn was reserved for the East European peasantry (chiefly Slavic) whose half-mystical attachment to the land and folk-directed culture led them to serve the most conservative interests of Europe. He assigned major blame for the failure of the Hungarian revolution of 1848 to the "reactionary" Croatian and Russian peasants who had "betrayed" their own best interests in following their leaders and crush-

⁴ See Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (New York, 1926), for a full exposition of the early Marxist identification with urbanism.

⁵ The discussion of these trends in David Mitrany's *Marx Against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, 1951) is excellent.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-21.

ing Kossuth.' In mid-nineteenth century Europe Marx's entire sym- 229
pathies were with the energetic city bourgeoisie and the rising
proletariat.*

Consequently it was clear to most 19th century Marxists that until radical changes had transformed the land, the peasantry would continue to be an anomaly in the developing industrial society. The prospect of radical change seemed to be offered in the early 19th century trend toward amalgamation of independent farm holdings under capitalist, or Junker, ownership; and the day was foreseen when the growth of the massive latifundia would have converted the once backward and provincial European peasant into a class-conscious and alert proletarian, capable of being organized along modern political lines. Furthermore, it was imagined that in conjunction with the proletarian revolution the small peasant holding, that "most primitive mode of exploitation," would give way to efficient, modernized production units capable of direct transformation in the crucible of revolution into "vital socialist forms."

THE MODIFIED MARXIST VIEW

At the close of the 19th century it became increasingly evident that agrarian conditions in Europe had not developed in the Marxist-prescribed manner. On the contrary, land reform and the abolition of serfdom, even in such backward regions as Russia and the Balkans, had created an increasing class of property-conscious peasants. The task of reconciling these facts with the traditional belief in the historical obsolescence of the peasantry was critical for Marxists.⁹ In France, Germany, and the Netherlands "reformist"

⁷ Marx wrote: "Except for the Poles, the Russians, and at best the Slavs in Turkey, no Slavic people has a future, for the simple reason that all Slavs lack the most basic historic, geographic, political and industrial prerequisites for independence and vitality." (Blackstock and Hoselitz, p. 72). And Engels on this point: "Now you may ask me whether I have no sympathy whatever for the small Slavic peoples, and remnants of peoples. . . . In fact, I have damned little sympathy for them." (*Ibid.*, p. 119).

⁸ Thus Marx rejoiced at the victory of the advanced and enterprising Americans over the Mexicans in the war of the 1840s, identified himself with the North over the South in the American Civil War, favored British imperialism over Russian imperialism in Central Asia, and supported a German victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In those situations where the "bourgeoisie" acted with great boldness in overthrowing antiquated forms and empires Marx celebrated its victories in lavish fashion.

⁹ See Mitrany, pp. 13-23, for discussion of the problems facing the Socialist movement in the late 19th century as it attempted to come to grips with land changes.

P29 theoreticians sought to revise the traditionally harsh view of the peasant, and contended that the victory of "socialism" did not hinge on complete destruction of the peasant way of life. The rise of peasant political consciousness which accompanied these developments had necessitated revaluation even from Marx and Engels who, for example, came to see a limited capacity for growth in the Russian *obshchina*. Engels went so far as to concede that revolution need not necessarily be accompanied by the expropriation of the property-conscious peasant, but that socialization of the land might follow only when the peasant was convinced of its benefits.¹⁰

THE LENINIST DEVELOPMENT

It is probably no accident that the single European Socialist party to develop a program which took some account of growing peasant demands was the only one to meet with revolutionary success. That such a program was developed was more than a tribute to Lenin's political genius; equally important was the fact that Russia possessed both a proletariat large and concentrated enough to generate an advanced Socialist party and a peasantry so enormous that revolutionary tactics without its cooperation were, in the long run, unthinkable.

Lenin's initial opinion of the Russian peasantry was based on the classical Marxist conceptions expounded by his mentor Plekhanov.¹¹ But the swift movement of events in the countryside at the turn of the century made Lenin increasingly aware of the revolutionary potential of the Russian peasantry and he sought to turn the growing peasant hatred of the land-owning class to his own ends. Thus, in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899), he had propounded the standard Marxist thesis that further pauperization, and so proletarianization, of the peasantry was a necessary condition to revolution in the countryside; but the active participation of sections of the peasantry in the 1905 Revolution changed Lenin's mind. "Our mistake," he observed after the 1905 Revolution, "consisted in underestimating the breadth and depth of the democratic, or rather bourgeois-democratic, movement among the peasantry. It is stupid to persist in this mistake now when the

¹⁰ See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Izbranniye Proizvedeniya* (Moscow, 1948), Vol. II, p. 415.

¹¹ A brief discussion of Plekhanov's ideas may be found in N. Popov, *Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow, 1934), Vol. 1, pp. 18-28.

Revolution has taught us so much."¹² The lessons of 1905 were summarized in *The Agrarian Question* (1908). In this work he postulated two possible courses for Russian agriculture: The "Prussian road" of government-sponsorship of the "predatory" kulak farmers, and the "American road" of the complete destruction of all feudal traces and the creation of a small-holding, independent peasantry. Lenin's readiness to support the "American road" aligned him with peasant demands for increased land and the destruction of all feudal remnants.¹³ 829

However, Lenin cautioned, as a Social Democrat he could not assure the peasants that he would forever support their property-conscious demands, and a "socialist agriculture" remained his final goal. Thus Lenin foresaw the inevitable clash of interests between the peasant and proletarian revolutions which Engels had anticipated when he wrote:

We say frankly that, given the prejudices flowing from their economic position, education, and isolated way of life . . . we can bring the peasants to our side only by making promises which we know beforehand we shall not be able to keep.¹⁴

These promises were made and temporarily honored by the first victorious Socialist party. It was not, however, until the eve of the 1917 Revolution, when the vast and spontaneous peasant rebellion convulsed the Russian countryside, that Lenin moved to cement the alliance between the peasant and proletarian revolutions. The working agreement between the two forces was based on common opposition to the land-owning classes (allies of the "bourgeois" government which the Bolsheviks sought to destroy) and was made possible by Lenin's temporary acquiescence to the peasant's own land program as formulated by the Social-Revolutionary Party. "These reforms are not our idea," Lenin said, but "we support them because they are demanded by the overwhelming majority of the peasants."¹⁵ The Bolsheviks did not administer, or even attempt to oversee, the expropriation of the Russian landed estates in the revolutionary period; but their seizure of power in November 1917 permitted the militant peasantry to complete the agrarian revolution begun many months before.

¹² Quoted by Bertram Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (New York, 1948), p. 364.

¹³ Lenin, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1934-39), Vol. I, pp. 84-91.

¹⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Izbranniye Proizvedeniia*, (Moscow, 1948), Vol. II, p. 414.

¹⁵ Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 200.

2. *Agrarian Policy Under the Soviets (1917-1945)*

471
565 The jerry-built alliance between proletariat and peasantry was put to severe strain almost immediately after its inception. The peasants parceled out the land and fought to hold their gains in the face of the "white" counter-revolution and foreign intervention. But the harsh, forced food requisitions demand by the Bolsheviks soon alienated the countryside, and the resignation of the Left Social Revolutionaries from the Soviet government soon made it clear that political control was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

The gulf dividing the peasants from their erstwhile comrades-in-arms was aptly symbolized by the law on nationalization of the land (February 19, 1918), decreeing that all land was the property of the State and was to be used only by those willing to till it. Though the law itself remained for a long time only a paper document, it presaged future conflicts. The Bolshevik experiments with collective forms of agriculture were another ominous sign for the future, although the early collectives, chiefly composed of landless peasants and romantic urban intellectuals, constituted no threat to the established rural order.¹⁶ Indeed, in the first decade of the Revolution there were no suggestions of the full-scale onslaught of collectivization that was to come, and no talk of a "collectivization drive." Lenin's frequently repeated warnings against coercion of the middle peasants (*srednyaki*) were taken to reflect settled policy. "You cannot create anything here by coercion," he said, and added:

Even in Europe, where [the middle peasantry] nowhere achieves such strength, where technology and culture, city life and railroads are tremendously developed, and where it would be easiest of all to think of such a thing, nobody, not even the most revolutionary of Socialists, has ever proposed adopting measures of coercion towards the middle peasantry.¹⁷

But events themselves were to force a harsher policy and the revolutionary alliance was soon cracked wide open. Heavy strains

¹⁶ Three types of communal farming were organized in the early period: 1) The Commune, a form in which all property was owned and all labor performed in common, where living itself was a cooperative venture. 2) The artel, a mixed form in which cooperative ownership and labor was found alongside private ownership and labor. 3) The TOZ, a "primitive" communal form in which cooperation was limited to the joint cultivation of the land. For a fuller description, see Harry Schwartz, *Russia's Soviet Economy* (New York, 1950), p. 259.

¹⁷ Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 178-79.

were generated by the agricultural crisis and the ensuing famine ⁴⁷¹ of 1920-21. To meet the needs of the urban population, the ⁵⁶⁵ Bolsheviks decreed a forced food levy (December 14, 1920) by which peasants were ordered to deliver their entire surplus to the State. The peasants, retaliating in kind, produced little more than their own needs demanded. Scattered peasant uprisings, together ^[669] with the Kronstadt rebellion early in 1921, combined to force a change of policy on the new regime. The strict codes of "War Communism" were abrogated and the New Economic Policy (NEP) was launched. Delivery quotas were introduced (amounting to a tax-in-kind) and peasants were encouraged to produce for a flourishing free market.

Thus, for a time under NEP the peasants, who now controlled almost all the arable land, were permitted to enjoy the fruits of their revolutionary exertions. Agricultural production recovered rapidly and a degree of national prosperity resulted. But the Bolsheviks had paid a price for this prosperity — the restoration of free market relations between town and country.

THE LENINIST DILEMMA

The unstable compromise of NEP postponed the inevitable ⁵⁷⁸ clash between the "proletarian dictatorship" and the victorious ¹⁸⁵ peasant revolution. Two parallel developments were rapidly to hasten the impending struggle: throughout the NEP period (1921-28) the peasants tightened their hold on the land, many of them growing relatively prosperous, and thereby fortifying their gains. At the same time the Bolsheviks were tightening their hold on the political machinery of the State and turning their party into a monolithic organization capable of an outright offensive against the rest of the country. Thus, the stage was set for the gigantic economic struggle of the late twenties.

The issue at stake between the Bolsheviks and the peasantry was only partly ideological. The conflict between the Bolshevik belief in the superior efficacy of large-scale "socialist" farming and the peasants' allegiance to his traditional "way of life" was important, but this conflict was subordinated to another one which was economic in character. The peasants and the Bolshevik regime faced each other across the table on which the grain produce of Russia was negotiated. And it was, in fact, in the realm of economics

578 that the two antagonists met and clashed in the "war" which re-
185 sulted in collectivized agriculture.¹⁸

The problem which the Bolsheviks had to deal with may be briefly stated. NEP had insured the continued political existence of the regime; but salvation had been achieved at a great price. To obtain a sufficient supply of agricultural produce to feed the rising urban population and, if possible, to permit acceleration of industrial growth, it was necessary to provide increased incentives for the peasantry. But to provide incentives for an increased supply of produce to the cities, it was also necessary to create an industry capable of supplying peasants with the consumer goods and agricultural machinery they demanded in exchange. Without recourse to foreign capital, this, in turn, was impossible, unless a steadily increasing supply of agricultural produce was guaranteed.

The problem of breaking this vicious circle occupied the thoughts of the best Party theoreticians throughout the period of NEP. Some, like Bukharin, suggested a solution bearing some resemblance to the pre-Revolutionary policies of Witte and Stolypin — a "gradualist" approach to industrialization, encouragement of the more efficient middle peasant producers, and limited recourse to foreign capital. Trotsky, as the leader of the radical Left Wing, called for an immediate drive for industrialization in which the peasants would absorb the major shock. The theoretical debate rose to its climax in the late twenties, coinciding with the final victory of the Stalinist faction of the Bolshevik Party and the resurgence of the agricultural crisis in a new form.¹⁹

THE PRE-COLLECTIVIZATION CRISIS

185 The Stalinist "solution" to the agricultural crisis (collectiviza-
471 tion) did not proceed according to a predetermined plan or theory.
423 Rather, it was developed pragmatically as a response to critical

¹⁸ Lazar Volin, a foremost American student of Soviet agriculture, also assigned priority to the practical, as opposed to the ideological basis of collectivization. He explained the Communist attachment to the *kolkhoz* in this way: "First, the practical or pragmatic reasons . . . [revolving] around the need for large supplies of cheap agricultural products to feed and clothe the growing industrial population and the army . . . Second, an ideological predilection for agrarian collectivism, rooted in the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist dogma." Lazar Volin, "Agricultural Organization," *Soviet Economic Growth*, Abraham Bergson (editor), White Plains, N. Y., 1953, p. 286.

¹⁹ A reliable account of the heated Party economic debate may be found in Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917* (New York, 1948), pp. 208-229, and of the political implications of the debate in Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 294-304.

economic conditions and the special requirements of the first Five Year Plan. Indeed, the first collectivization drive was expected to bring only 14 per cent of the land into the "socialist sector". The overwhelming success of the drive was as much a surprise to the Communist leadership as to the peasants themselves. And it was only when the drive turned out to be so phenomenally successful that the Communist planners stepped up the targets and pace of the Five Year Plan itself. 185
471
423

The agricultural crisis which inspired the collectivization drive of the first Five Year Plan had its origins in two situations: First, the acute grain shortage of 1927-28, and second, and more important, the post-Revolutionary structure of the land (see Chart I). As a result of the peasant revolution of 1917-18, the small and medium peasantry occupied almost all the arable land in the Soviet Union. Where they had produced only 50 per cent of nation's grain in pre-war times, they produced 85 per cent in 1926-27. Since the poor and middle peasants marketed a far smaller percentage of the grain they produced than had the great landowners and kulaks of pre-war times, their domination of the land produced a serious drop in marketed commodities. [442]

Thus, while total grain production had declined by only five per cent below pre-Revolutionary levels, marketed grain had declined by *more than 50 per cent* — from 28 per cent of five billion poods in 1913 to 13.3 per cent of 4.749 billion poods in 1926-27.²⁰ The cities received far less grain than they had received in pre-war times; and due to a number of factors (among them the competition between various State purchasing agencies), the cities were paying a higher price for the grain they could obtain. One of the most serious consequences of this new relationship was the fact that little grain was available for foreign export to pay for desperately needed capital equipment.

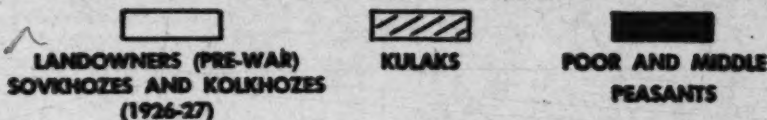
The basic problem for the regime was to create an agricultural structure which would enable the State to siphon off a *far greater proportion of the total product*, at a price it wished to pay, than was possible under the conditions of NEP. While it is true that the regime wished to increase total agricultural production, and may have expected to achieve the goal through increased mechanization of the farms, this target was secondary. For achieving the primary goal — extraction of a greater *proportion* of the produce —

²⁰ A pood equals 36 pounds.

CHART I

241 GRAIN PRODUCED and MARKETED in SOVIET RUSSIA

Pre-World War I and 1926-27*



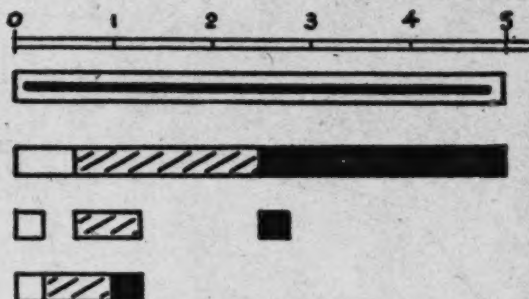
BILLIONS OF POODS

PRE-WORLD WAR I Russia produced five billion poods of grain

of which the landowners produced 12%, kulaks 38%, and poor and middle peasants 50%.

The landowners marketed 47% of their crop, the kulaks 34%, and the poor and middle peasants 14.7%.

Altogether, 1.3 billion poods of grain were sent to market.

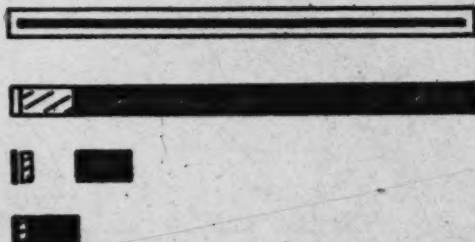


SOVIET RUSSIA IN 1926-27 produced 4.7 billion poods of grain

of which sovkhozes and kolkhozes produced 1.7%, kulaks 13%, and poor and middle peasants 85.3%.

Sov- and kolkhozes marketed 47.2% of their crops, kulaks 20%, and poor and middle peasants only 11.2%.

Altogether, only 0.6 billion poods of grain were sent to market.



* Stalin, Problems of Leninism, (Eng. ed. 1940) p. 205.

the vehicle of the large-scale collective farm, heretofore neglected, stood ready at hand.²¹ 185 471 423

The very essence of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) system lay in the ease with which it facilitated extraction of heavy tribute from the land in the form of extremely cheap supplies of foodstuffs and industrial crops. Thus, the rise of the Stalinist land system was closely connected with the Party's program of break-neck industrialization, massive capital investments, and strategic projects at the expense of consumption. The ever-tightening hold of the regime over the industrial working class made possible implementation of these policies without the development of consumer goods facilities; and therefore the regime could permit a drop in the levels of consumption without jeopardizing its plan. The new agricultural program — designed primarily to *redistribute* agricultural produce rather than to *increase* it — was consistent with this aspect of the plan. Moreover, the political hold collectivization afforded over the peasants assured State control of the rural labor supply and enabled the State to channel manpower into non-agricultural occupation as it deemed necessary.

This was the general rationale behind collectivization. The immediate cause for the first collectivization drive lay, however, in the mounting economic tensions of the late 1920s. As early as 1925-26 the regime had sought to reimpose many of the agrarian controls lifted in 1921, at the time of the inauguration of NEP. To implement this policy, agricultural prices were once again restricted and production itself subjected to heavy taxes. Retaliating in kind, the peasants drove production downward, hoarded again, and consumed what they could not hide or sell.²² As a consequence State grain collections in 1928-29 dropped more than one-third below the level of two years before. Tension in the countryside mounted. The means by which the new monolithic party chose to meet this situation was of a magnitude equal to the challenge.

THE STALINIST SOLUTION TO THE LAND PROBLEM

The great offensive against the peasantry was launched late

²¹ The *artel* was considered the best form of collective agriculture since it combined a sufficient number of communal features to guarantee State control with sufficient household autonomy to make it structurally feasible to the peasants. The State-appointed managers, supported by local party administrators, could enforce peasant cooperation with the Plan; and the continued existence of individual households offered the peasant that minimum of private incentive consistent with the cooperation.

²² This crisis is well described in Dobb, p. 222.

423 in 1928, but it was not until one year later, when Stalin called for
185 "liquidation of the kulaks as a class," that its full weight was felt. Since the actual number of kulaks in post-Revolutionary Russia was not very great, this slogan made it abundantly clear that the frankly military offensive was directed against the peasantry as a whole. The story is well known: the dispatch of Communist shock cadres to the villages, the mass deportations, the herding of peasants into hastily formed collective units, the calculated famine in the Ukraine, the wholesale slaughter of livestock by the desperate peasants, the brief pause ordered by Stalin early in 1930, the renewed offensive in 1931-32, the collapse of the opposition, and the final establishment of a collective farm system in all essential respects resembling that of today. There were many subsequent modifications of the system; but its basic features were firmly established in the "avalanche" of collectivization in the 1928-32 period.

In evaluating the success of the drive and the system it created, it is necessary to reiterate that the primary utility of the collective farm lay in its efficiency as an economic and political *control device*, by which rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union could be facilitated, and not in its efficiency of production. To the extent that it made industrialization possible, it is possible to show that Soviet collectivization "succeeded."

241 So far as production is concerned, the efficiency of the collec-
423 tive farm was, and remains, low. It has been estimated that Soviet grain production in 1939 did not exceed that of 1928 by much more than the increase of sown area over the 11 intervening years.²³ Similarly, the gross production value of Soviet agriculture in 1940 exceeded 1928 by only a small fraction, though in the bumper year of 1937 the harvest may have been as much as 14 per cent higher.²⁴ Throughout the 1930s the Soviets put forth many claims of increased agricultural productivity which were, however, discounted by most Western experts/ Western scepticism was vindicated by the 1953 acknowledgement of agricultural deterioration by N. S. Khrushchev, one of the chief architects of later Soviet agricultural policy.²⁵

²³ Naum Jasny, *Socialized Agriculture of the U.S.S.R.* (Stanford, 1950), p. 548.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

²⁵ Jasny's figures, which are cited above, are somewhat lower than official Soviet boasts. He made allowance for statistical falsification involved in such Soviet practices as measuring production in accordance with the "biological yield," a misleading statistical device employed by the Soviets since the early thirties and condemned by Malenkov in his August 8th, 1953 address.

TABLE 1

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT IN USSR
BEFORE AND AFTER COLLECTIVIZATION †241
423

YEAR	TOTAL YIELD*	OBLIGATORY Million Centners	DELIVERIES Percent of Total Crop	RETAINED BY FARMERS Million Centners	Percent of Total Crop**
1927/8	605.9	112.2	18.5	493.7	100
1932/3	570.1	185.2	32.5	384.9	77.9
1933/4	677.1	228.7	33.8	448.4	90.8
1934/5	669.5	226.6	33.8	442.9	89.7
1935/6	677.5	249.3	36.8	428.2	86.7
1936/7	612.5	260.0	42.4	353.5	71.4

† Prokopovitch, S. N., *Russlands Volkswirtschaft unter den Sowjets*, (Zurich, 1944), pp. 136, 138.

* Net totals, after seeds deducted from the total yield.

** 100 equals total crop retained by farmer 1927/8. Figures for subsequent years show percentage 1927/8 total retained.

But whatever the failure of collectivization to achieve productive efficiency, and other ostensible goals widely advertised in the propaganda of the time,²⁶ the Soviet State remained completely loyal to the system, bolstering it by police action and developing its distinctive features over the years. Evidently, the regime considered that for its investment, it was receiving an adequate return. The explanation for this unswerving loyalty to the system, in the face of the massive difficulties encountered, is to be found in the striking change in the pattern of grain collection after collectivization (see Table 1). In 1928 the State collected no more than 18.5 per cent of the total grain crop, while in 1937 an estimated 42.4 per cent was State-collected.²⁷ That this was a direct result of collectivization may be seen in the fact that, from the start, the collectivized sector

²⁶ For example, one of the regime claims was that collectivization wiped out the inequality between the rich kulak and the poor peasant. The hypocrisy of this claim was made evident in the agricultural order that replaced the old one. Thus Jasny writes: "The former kulaki, actually the more energetic, harder working peasants, are now replaced by the army of chairmen of the *kolkhozy*, tractor drivers, combine operators, and the like. These workers both number and earn more than the kulaki . . ." (Jasny, p. 75).

²⁷ Harry Schwartz (p. 313) gives the Figure 15 per cent for 1928 and 40 per cent for 1939.

241 produced more for the market per hectare of arable land than did
423 the private sector. In 1932, 60 per cent of all households in the
185 Soviet Union had been collectivized, embracing 66 per cent of the
sown area. Yet the collective and State farms (*sovkhozy*) supplied
84 per cent of the marketed grain and 83 per cent of the cotton.²⁸

241 With the reinforcement of the collective farm system the State
185 was in a position where it could force the peasants to serve as a
471 cushion for harvest shocks. In 1937, a bumper year, the peasants
423 received 35.9 per cent of the total grain crop for division among
themselves; but in 1938-39, mediocre crop years, the peasants re-
ceived only 26.9 and 22.9 per cent of the total, despite the fact
that a smaller gross volume was to be shared.²⁹ In each case primary
State needs governed the division of the agricultural yield. The
Soviet Government had created an administrative apparatus which
insured, in the words of one observer, that "if anyone was to starve,
[the peasants] would be the first to do so."³⁰

The function of the State farms in the Soviet system is similarly
linked to the problem of agricultural deliveries. Though accounting
for no more than 10 per cent of the arable area in 1937, the
sovkhozy delivered 30 per cent of the milk, 25 per cent of the wool,
and 24 per cent of the meat delivered to the State in that year.
Whereas the grain producing collectives delivered only one-third
of their total product to the State in the late thirties, the *sovkhozy*
contributed three-quarters of their crop.³¹ Hence, it may be said
that, from the point of view of the Soviet planner, the State farms
bore a superiority over the collective farms similar to the superior-
ity of the collectives over the private farms.

471 The case for collectivization was aptly summed up by N. A.
423 Voznesensky when he revealed that the Soviet government in
World War II collected three times the annual amount of grain
collected by the Czarist regime during World War I when "72 per
cent of all marketed grain was concentrated in the hands of estate
owners and kulaks." This threefold increase in marketable surplus

²⁸ Dobb, p. 249. There were, of course, other factors which accounted for the meagre quantity of goods placed on the market by the private sector, in particular, the amount of State discrimination against the private farms.

²⁹ Harry Schwartz, p. 265. Schwartz writes with regard to this question: "Only the government's complete domination of the peasantry through the collective farm system made this sharp change in the amount of grain collected possible." (p. 313).

³⁰ Leonard Hubbard, *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture* (London, 1939), p. 123.

³¹ Harry Schwartz, p. 285.

became possible, he concluded, "only on the basis of large-scale mechanized Socialist agriculture."²² 47/ 423

THE STALINIST SYSTEM DEVELOPED

Since its establishment during the first Five Year Plan the collective farm system has undergone a period of modification (1933-38), a period of intensified exploitation (1938-41), a period of wartime chaos and relaxation (1941-45), and a period of re-imposed controls and further tightening (1945-53).

In the early phases of collectivization, deliveries were fixed by arbitrary "contracts" between the *kolkhozy* and the State — the contracts resembling the compulsory requisitions of War Communism. By 1933 peasant opposition, though generally weak and disorganized, forced the regime to grant minor concessions. Foremost among these was a system of fixed quotas to replace the contractual levies. By this device it was hoped to induce the individual *kolkhoznik* to cultivate more intensively, since any surplus beyond the fixed quota was retained by the collective farm and distributed among its members. The concessionary mood of this era was reflected finally in the Artel Statute of 1935 granting the collective farmer a household plot (one-quarter to one-half hectare) and the right to own a limited number of livestock, permission to sell surplus foodstuffs on the urban free market, a more equitable payment system, and a much restricted voice in *kolkhoz* management.

In the years immediately preceding World War II the Soviet regime had again begun to encroach on the rights granted under the Artel Statute. In 1939 the State decreed severe penalties for infractions of collective farm discipline and in 1940 the workday was lengthened. Similarly the method of computing delivery quotas was made stricter. Henceforth norms were computed not on the basis of actual area sown, but on the basis of arable land owned by the collective farm. Since yield estimates computed by State officials were generally arbitrary, the hardship worked by this new departure was severe.

The main direction of the government on the eve of World War II was thus to restrict further the private sector within the collective farms and to redirect attention to the communal land. The result was that an increasing proportion of the peasants' prod-

²² Nikolai A. Voznesensky, *The Economy of the U.S.S.R. During World War II* (Public Affairs Press, Washington, D. C., 1948), p. 53.

471 act was taken by the State. The regime was still tightening controls when the German Army attacked in June of 1941.
423

World War II subjected the entire collective system to its severest strain and, as Voznesensky observed, the system continued to supply the minimum of foodstuffs necessary for the war, although the regime had to loosen its hold considerably to guarantee the supply. That this achievement was a tribute to the vitality of the State agricultural administration, rather than the morale of the peasants, is suggested by the fact that in those areas invaded by the Germans - particularly Byelorussia and the Ukraine - large masses of peasants greeted them as liberators with the traditional bread and salt. But the Germans, who were as interested as their predecessors in a high "marketable surplus," maintained the kolkhozy intact. This policy and the standard Hitlerian excesses in conquered Slavic territory soon alienated the peasants.

[66] With the defeat of the Nazi invasion and the cessation of hostilities in Europe and Asia, the Soviet regime sought to reimpose the agrarian controls loosened in wartime. In line with this policy, the government instituted a vast purge of collective farm directors and decreed a monetary reform in 1947 that wiped out at one stroke most of the savings accumulated by peasants during the war.
[65] Taxes on incomes derived from the household plots were raised sharply in 1948, 1950, and 1951; delivery quotas on dairy products and meats produced in the household plots were also raised. The culmination of this development in the kolkhozy was the shift from the zveno (link, or small unit) work system to large-scale labor brigades. Under an amalgamation program the number of collective farms in the Soviet Union was reduced from 252,000 to 97,000. A further effort in this direction was the plan associated with Khrushchev's name to weld the collective farms into vast "agro-towns" (agroroda), in which the peasantry would suffer the final transformation into a rural proletariat. Although this effort met with acknowledged failure, the theory behind it was not abandoned. In Stalin's last published work, Economic Problems of Socialism in the U. S. S. R., he called for a program of "gradual" transformation of collective into public property - in short, the eventual conversion of all agricultural units into State farms." 33

33 Joseph Stalin, Economic Problems of Socialism in the U. S. S. R. (International Publishers, New York), p. 51. In the same work Stalin called for a "relatively higher rate of expansion of the production of the means of production." The two programs - further statification of the farms and the acceleration of investment - were, in fact, inseparable.

Stalin's last work represented the apex of the agricultural policies initiated under his leadership during the first Five Year Plan. In the period after his death the Communists lost the offensive for the first time since 1928 and began to restructure the system in terms of new realities.²⁴ But in all the revaluation of time-honored doctrines which followed Stalin's death, the essential necessity of the *kolkhoz* system to the Soviet way of life has never been disputed. For the Soviet leaders, at least, it had proved its worth. 47/ 423

This, then, was the system which the East European Communist Parties, drawing so heavily upon Soviet experience, attempted to introduce into the newly-conquered regions in the aftermath of World War II.

²⁴ See below, pp. 116-124.

CHAPTER II

THE EAST EUROPEAN SETTING

1. General Factors

175 In the early spring and summer of 1944 the Soviet armies breached the German defenses on the Dniester and the Bug and, advancing through the territories of pre-war Romania and Poland, entered a region which, for purposes of convenience, may be termed Eastern Europe.¹ By the time World War II had ended a year later Soviet power was established as far as the Elbe river in the west and the borders of Greece in the south. The path was cleared for the Communist reorganization of Eastern Europe.

In the first months the primary lever of political and social change was the Soviet Army itself. But the new imperial apparatus did not long depend solely upon direct military intervention. In the wake of the advancing armies a well-organized political apparatus moved which, though few in numbers, was endowed with much of the militancy and dynamism of the Soviet system.

665 Generally, post-war Communist leadership was Moscow-trained, had served long apprenticeships in the Comintern apparatus, and was familiar with the hierarchal operations of an organization which invested all initiative in the Moscow center.² Although some of the leaders had led a furtive underground existence between the wars, they were no longer genuine revolutionaries, but agents of an imperial power designated with imposing the developed Soviet political and economic system on countries whose languages

¹ The term Eastern Europe, as used here, includes what is often referred to as Central and Eastern Europe, but does not include Russia, which is frequently considered part of Eastern Europe. Certain German writers, seeing in the region a mosaic of under-developed and politically weak states, have sometimes used the phrase *Zwischen-Europa* ("Between Europe"). For the purposes of this paper, the term Eastern Europe is taken to be coextensive with the Soviet satellite sphere, excluding East Germany, but including Yugoslavia whose regime broke with Moscow in 1948.

² The character of the post-war seizure of power by the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe is treated more fully below, pp. 42-43. For a good general account of these events, see Hugh Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 287-328.

665 and customs they knew, and of which they were usually natives.³ As subsequent events were to show, the transplantation of the Soviet system to Eastern Europe proved to be far more complicated than these former Cominternists had perhaps anticipated. Local conditions and traditions of the captive countries were everywhere to balk them, demanding improvisations and flexibilities for which they were unprepared.

The story of land collectivization in the Satellites from 1945 to 1953 is consequently the story of the interaction between a highly developed system of agrarian exploitation torn from its Soviet context, and the indigenous conditions of Eastern Europe which confronted Party political-economic planners at every turn. A brief review of these conditions is in order.

2. *The Rise of the Peasant Proprietor (1800-1939)*

565
423 Although some remnants of an essentially feudal land system survived in areas of Poland and Hungary (particularly the latter) until the eve of World War II, the major features of East European feudalism, contrary to popular belief, died before the beginning of "the 20th century." Serfdom was finally abolished by parliamentary legislation or revolutionary action by 1860: in the Austrian "hereditary lands" (including Slovenia, Bohemia and Moravia) as early as 1781; in Croatia in 1848; in Hungary (including Slovakia) in 1849; in Congress Poland in 1861; and in Romania in 1864. Emancipation of the Serbian and Bulgarian peasantry resulted from progressive limitations of the political power of their Turkish overlords, a process which took place throughout the 19th century.

As was the case in Russia, however, emancipation did not solve the basic problems of East European rural society. Indeed, with the growing incorporation of Eastern Europe into the world agricultural market, the problems grew even more severe in the 19th century. Except in Bulgaria and Serbia, where a class of peasant smallholders emerged within the framework of Ottoman society, the abolition of serfdom did not establish a sturdy, independent peasantry such as existed in the West. Even in Bulgaria

³ "The East European revolution . . . was imposed from outside and from above . . . [and therefore cannot] justly be compared with the revolutions of 1688, 1789, and 1917." (Seton-Watson, p. vii.)

⁴ It is necessary, one writer points out, to stress the incorrectness of the widely-held view that "the feudal system, with the characteristic features of the large latifundia, continued to prevail east of the Elbe until the arrival of the Soviet Army." (Ygael Gluckstein, *Stalin's Satellites in Europe*, London, 1952, p. 13).

565 and Serbia the peasants, though not oppressed, were extremely
423 poor. The peasant was no longer tied to the land, but in a great
many cases his emancipation meant only that he worked for the
same landlord to whom he was once bound. Furthermore, glaring
inequalities in the pattern of land ownership developed after
emancipation. (Chart IV indicates the inequalities of land distribu-
tion surviving the post-World War I reforms).

The root of the problem lay in the fact that emancipation did
not lead to a basic improvement in the technological level of farm-
ing (with the possible exception of Bohemia) so that with the late
19th century increase in population, the struggle among the peas-
ants was for more land, not for improved technique.⁶ In Western
Europe the emancipation of the peasantry had been accompanied
by the slow certain growth of commerce and industry, but in
Eastern Europe no urban society developed to compensate for, and
offset, the agrarian dislocations. The rising competition of American
grain on the world market further contributed to steady deteriora-
tion of the agrarian situation.

565 In the years prior to World War I there developed — both
423 among city intellectuals and peasantry — a growing consciousness
of the need for profound reform of the land system. Groups were
created to discuss the problems but little concretely was done
before the war. The great peasant revolt which shook Rumania in
1907, though rapidly suppressed, climaxed this pre-war drive for
basic economic change.⁶

World War I, a social as well as a military convulsion, gave
the first real impetus to the drive for reform. Stimulated by the
success of the peasant revolution in Russia and by local nationalist
ferment, the East European peasants organized the first political
parties to promulgate demands in the name of the peasants as a
distinct class. Their immediate demand was for sweeping land
reforms, and their long-range hope was a share in the rule of their
countries. "The peasants," in the words of one historian, "were
roused and seemingly had learnt that land without liberty, or liberty
without land, would be but a half freedom, and that to gain con-
trol of power was necessary."⁷ In Bulgaria the Agrarian Party, under

⁶ The increase in population density in Eastern Europe in recent years is re-
flected in the fact that, for example, the average Bulgarian farm occupied
7.3 hectares in 1897, and only 4.5 hectares in 1946. Sharp reductions in land
per peasant occurred in each of the East European countries.

⁶ See Henry Roberts, *Rumania* (New York, 1949), p. 11-21.

⁷ David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1951),
p. 121.

the leadership of the radical Alexander Stambouliski, took power⁶⁶⁹ after the war. Though his regime was overthrown by the reaction-⁵⁶⁵ary Tsankov-Volkov *coup* of 1923, with every excess and barbarity,⁴²³ Stambouliski's premiership left a lasting social imprint. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe peasant parties were not strong enough to take the reigns of government, but the impact of the "green rising" was reflected everywhere in legislative activity.

In Romania about 50 per cent of the arable land (four million⁴²³ hectares) was transferred to peasant smallholders, reflecting the vigor of the 1907 uprising. In newly-created Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia the reforms were less spectacular, but followed the same area-wide pattern. In these two countries the land reforms had a national as well as social character, the majority of the expropriated lands having been Hungarian and German properties.*

The same forces were at work in Poland where the issue of land reform was uppermost in the public consciousness at the time of the nation's reestablishment. Despite determined opposition from the land owning classes, limited land reforms were decreed in 1919 and 1920. But partly because the principle of total compensation was accepted, only two and a half million hectares were distributed among the peasants by 1938, only enough to satisfy the land hunger of approximately half the natural increase in population.*

In the entire region only Hungary resisted peasant demands for land reform. There the movement was effectively blocked, first by Bela Kun's temporary Communist dictatorship, and then by the Horthy reaction. The land structure that emerged from the post-war reforms is described in Chart IV.

As Chart IV indicates, the post-World War I reforms left much to be accomplished in the direction of equalizing the peasant land tenure. But from the Baltic to the Aegean the reforms signified

* In Czechoslovakia 12 per cent of the arable land, or 1.7 million hectares, was distributed under the reform; in Yugoslavia 12.5 per cent of the arable land, or 1.8 million hectares, was distributed. The Yugoslav reforms were largely confined to Croatia and Slovenia, former provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

* Ferdynand Zweig, *Poland Between the Wars* (London, 1944), p. 130. Zweig's analysis of the national discussion of reform in the early 1920s is interesting, partly because so many of the arguments employed by those who opposed breaking up the large estates are those which are today used to justify the modern *kolkhozi*. This is true particularly of the argument that "self-sufficient small holdings are supposed to be unsuitable for compulsory deliveries in war-time." (p. 134).

423 the growing strength of the peasants and a further consolidation of a distinctly peasant culture with its special mores and traditions.¹⁰

Post-Reform Conditions

423
341 Despite the undoubted benefits which land reform brought to many formerly impoverished peasants, the agricultural economy of Eastern Europe remained largely stagnant in the inter-war period. The failure of the reforms to work a radical improvement in the standard of living and to raise total agricultural production may be attributed to the fact that the reforms themselves were primarily political rather than economic in intent. They were motivated very largely by the "green rising," the panic fear of Bolshevism (which seized power in Bela Kun's Hungary in 1919 and swept to the gates of Warsaw in 1920), the social upheaval of the First World War, and the new nationalism. In no case is there evidence that an overall increase of agricultural production was the primary goal. Like the vast revolution in the Russian countryside of 1917-18, the East European reforms were designed to "distribute wealth, rather than to produce it."¹¹

In short, if the reforms narrowed the gap between rich and poor, they failed to create the lasting conditions of agricultural prosperity. Indeed, by reducing the area of the landed estates which traditionally produced large marketable surpluses, the reforms hindered urban-industrial growth and restricted cash exports.¹² As a consequence, the agricultural level of Eastern Europe remained far below that of the more advanced countries of Western Europe (see Table 2). Essentially the same picture emerges from computation of the annual per hectare yield of the East European countries (see Chart II).

¹⁰ *Agrarian Problems from the Baltic to the Aegean* (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1944), p. 58.

¹¹ Wilbert E. Moore, *Economic Demography of Eastern and Southern Europe* (Geneva, 1945), p. 100. For a similar view, stressing the political rather than the economic motivation of the East European land reform, see David Mitrany, *The Land and the Peasant in Rumania* (Oxford, 1930), Chapter 10.

¹² Data on the relative efficiency of small and large-scale farming in Eastern Europe are scanty, but Seton-Watson concluded that it was generally true that "the smaller the holding, the lower the productivity of the soil." (Seton-Watson, p. 86). Similarly, Moore held that "the large holdings tend to yield a greater product per unit of capital by more nearly maximum utilization of work animals." (Moore, p. 101). But whether or not large-scale farming was more efficient than small-scale farming, there is no doubt that the large-scale farms produced a higher proportion of the marketed produce, although this factor varied from country to country and from region to region.

241

CHART II

ANNUAL YIELD per ACRE, AVERAGE 1933-37^{*}

IN CWTs



WHEAT



RYE

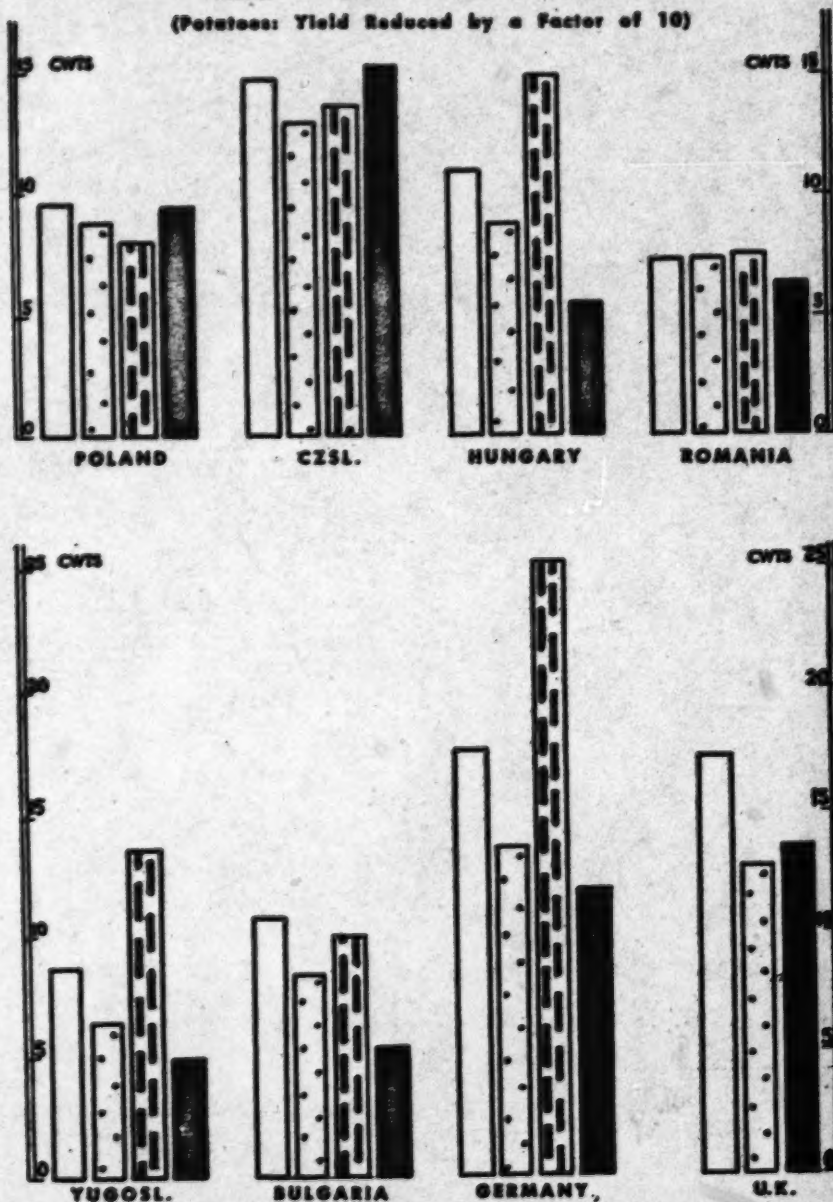


MAIZE



POTATOES

(Potatoes: Yield Reduced by a Factor of 10)



^{*} *Agrarian Problems from the Baltic to the Aegean*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1948, p. 53.

TABLE 2

611 ANNUAL CONSUMPTION OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS
IN PRE-WAR EASTERN EUROPE
(in lbs.)

	Wheat & Rye	Maize	Potatoes	Sugar	Meat	Milk	Fats	Eggs (No.)
Poland	392	—	550	27	50	260	21	90
Czechoslovakia	275	25	280	47	63	290	40	169
Hungary	550	—	220	26	57	240	30	95
Romania	245	400	110	15	55	140	25	90
Yugoslavia	265	340	130	12	44	160	18	45
Bulgaria	440	—	35	12	45	150	19	80
Denmark	265	Nil	250	117	124	410	67	115

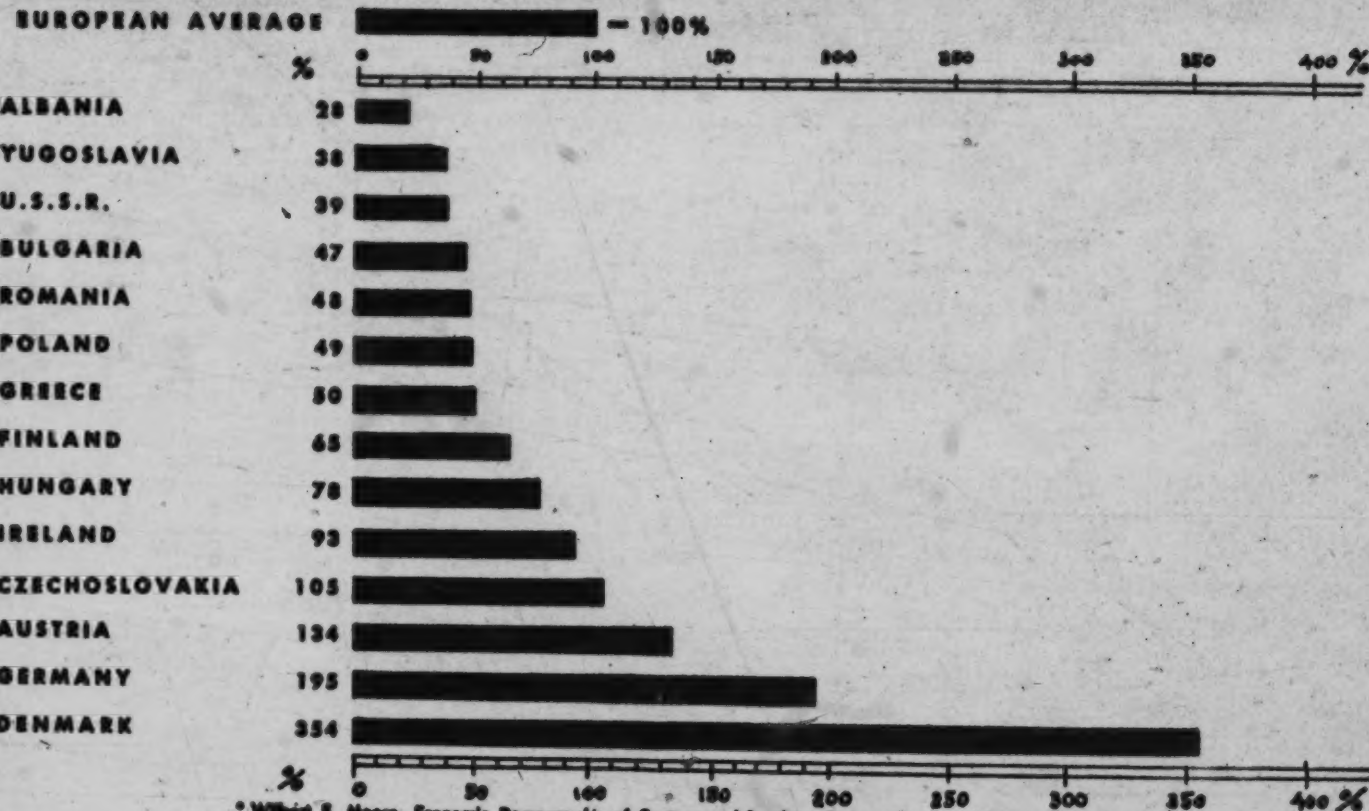
* *Agrarian Problems from the Baltic to the Aegean*, pp. 44.

241 The land, some of it rich, but most of it poor, was exploited
311 in a backward fashion — in Bulgaria and Yugoslav Macedonia many
of the peasants worked with a wooden plow not very different in
design from one described by Virgil in the *Georgics* 19 hundred
years before. The inevitable subdivision of the land among the
peasant's sons made application of modern agricultural techniques
virtually impossible, and the accumulation of sufficient capital to
purchase such equipment out of question. In addition, growing
rural over-population kept farm wages low, and made the use of
modern machinery uneconomical from the peasants' point of view.
[435] Above all, the peasantry was oppressed by the traditional "price
scissors," or the disparity between the prices received for their crops
on the urban market and prices paid for industrial products, a
relationship which arose from the "small domestic market for agri-
cultural products and the small supply of manufactured goods
produced by domestic industry."¹⁹

But the trouble lay not merely in the backwardness of the peas-
ant agricultural system. The political structure of the country,
either conservative or semi-fascist, tended to favor urban groups.
In the allotment of national resources such projects as peasant

¹⁹ Moore, p. 89.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION per PERSON DEPENDENT on AGRICULTURE **AVERAGE 1931-1935.***



* Wilbert E. Moore, *Economic Demography of Eastern and Southern Europe* (Geneva, 1945), p. 35.

24/ banks, agro-technical training schools, agricultural machine industries, and rural communications received only minor allocations. The backward condition of rural transportation made the task of competing with foreign grain — especially American — on the world market that much more difficult and the lack of facilities for the fertilizer production helped maintain the low yield.

The institutional organization of agriculture placed strong impediments to improved efficiency and increased productivity. Thus the small size of peasant holdings, frequently scattered in tiny plots, subdivided through inheritance, in debt to local banks, sometimes still held under tenancy arrangements, all combined to blight the hopes raised by the first post-war reforms.

The means and resources of the various national governments were usually devoted to furthering industrial development and the accumulation of capital for favored projects from which the peasants rarely benefited. While in some countries import duties on motor cars might be reduced, duties on agricultural machinery were gradually raised.¹³ The blind pursuit of such policies by the inter-war governments inevitably deepened the rift between town and country, and intensified peasant suspicion of the central regimes. In some cases the response of the regimes to such suspicions was to convert themselves into semi-fascist governments, which were not dependent upon that minimum of popular support which their semi-parliamentary predecessors required for continued existence.¹⁴

3. World War II and After

423 If World War I set in motion the process of land reform, World War II brought that process to a close. No doubt the sudden emergence of the Communists as a major political force in the area expedited completion of the reforms begun in the 1920s, but

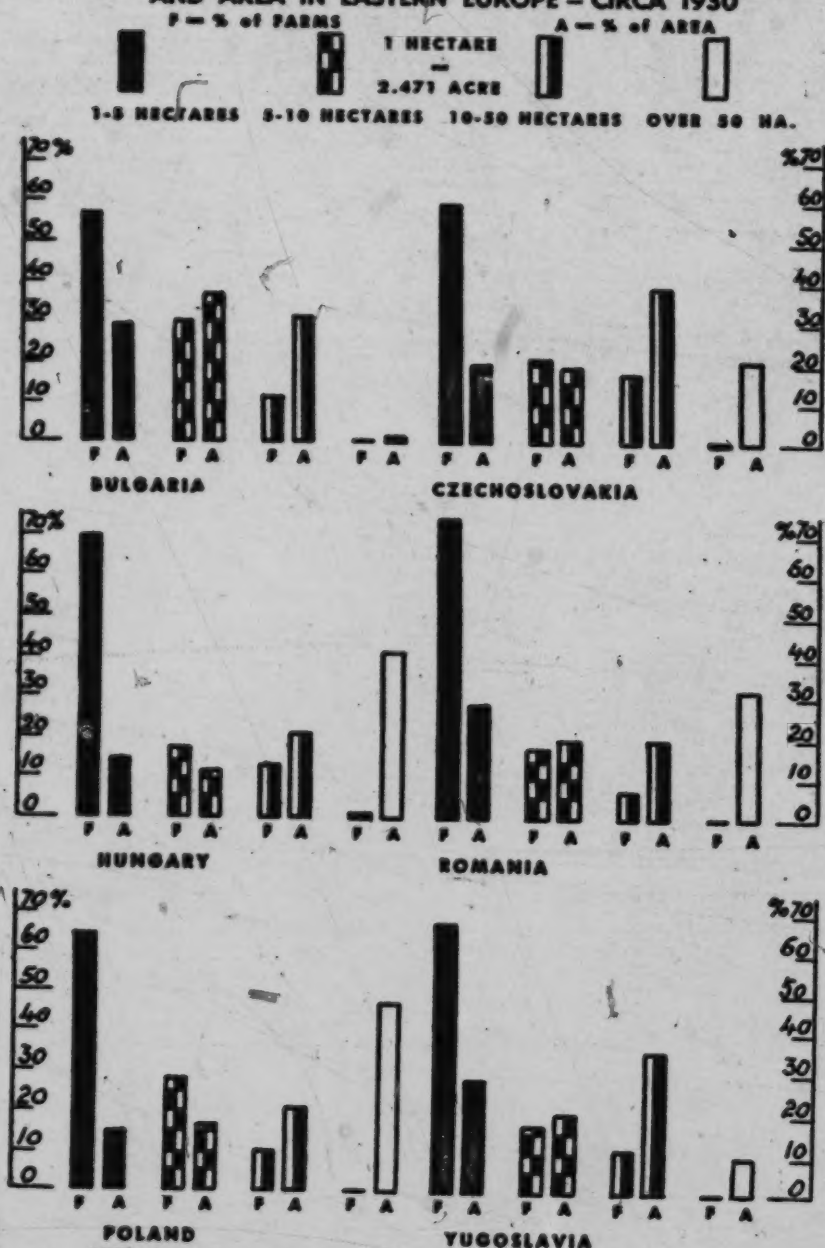
¹³ *Agrarian Problems from the Baltic to the Aegean*, p. 41-2. In Romania prior to 1928 the government imposed export duties on agricultural products. These duties were revoked but the general disregard for the needs of the landed population remained. And while it is true that there were efforts on the part of East European governments to make some administrative services available to the peasants (such as the Hungarian Social Fund, the O.N.C.s.A.) they were halting and generally short-lived.

¹⁴ The process of excluding peasant parties from any kind of representation in the governments began with Hungary in 1919, continued with Bulgaria in 1923, with Poland in 1926, with Yugoslavia in 1929, and with Rumania in 1931 (Mitrany, p. 122). Only the Czechoslovak Agrarian Party was able to remain in power, and in Bulgaria the Agrarian Party returned briefly between 1930 and 1934.

CHART IV

DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BY SIZE AND AREA IN EASTERN EUROPE - CIRCA 1930*

241
311



* Wilbur Moore, Economic Demography of Eastern and Southern Europe (Geneva), 1945, p. 82.

423 there were many indigenous forces which played a role as well. The war shook the fragile structure of East European society and made it vulnerable to rapid and drastic change.

Indeed, even in pre-war years the agitation for land reform had begun to take on serious character. By 1939 the rising peasant demands in Poland for further division of the landed estates had posed a critical challenge to the Sanacja regime and there were signs that the Hungarian ruling class were beginning to recognize the inevitability of land redistribution.

423
665 The impact of the war on the consciousness of the people was most dramatically expressed in the political reorientation which accompanied it. Tito's Partisan movement drew important support from the ranks of the impoverished peasantry. The sharp upward surge of the Czechoslovak Communist Party after the war may be taken, at least in part, as an indication of a more radical mood in the population as a whole. In Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, the ruling classes, which contracted disastrous alliances with Hitler's New Order, had thereby discredited themselves, and gave way to spokesmen for radical action.

These changes were reflected politically in the fact that the main opposition to the Communists in the post-war era came, not from the remnants of the pre-war ruling classes, but from the more progressive peasant, and to a degree, from Social Democratic parties. The general framework of political and social thought had shifted to the left, and parties such as the Smallholders in Hungary and the Peasant Party in Poland assumed the dominant positions denied them in pre-war political life.¹⁵

423 Under these conditions the rapid conclusion of land reforms was inevitable and the Communists appeared, not as the instigators of reform, but as its overseer. Indeed, the reforms instituted in 1945-46 were not "socialist" in character, even in Hungary and

¹⁵ The history of the non-Communist agrarian reform movements in Eastern Europe, prior to, and during World War II is yet to be written. The task is made somewhat difficult by present Communist efforts to blot out all evidence of the very existence of such movements outside the realm of the Communist Parties. The "Village Explorers" in Hungary, for example, who identified the high standards of peasant culture with an expected national renaissance, helped pave the way for the great reforms of 1945. Other groups, such as the Plowman's Front in Romania and the "Pladne" Agrarians in Bulgaria, also played, or might have played, important roles. The Polish Peasant Party is also worth considering in this respect because its role in the wartime resistance gave it roots among the peasantry sometimes lacking in the inter-war official "peasant" parties.

Poland where they were most extensive. On the contrary, like the 423 reforms of the 1920s, they signified a broadening of the property basis of society, not its limitation, and their aim was redistribution of property and wealth, not the reorganization of production.

Communist participation in the land reforms must be under-423
stood as a part of their political program, not as a part of their 665
social program of "building socialism." The overriding concern of the East European Communist Parties in the post-war period was not the shape of the future economy, but the assumption of the political power. The Communists offered no opposition to the implementation of the reforms, and, in most cases, expedited them to curry favor with the population. The Communists attuned themselves to the popular mood, carefully concealing the focal point of their operations, which lay in the day-to-day process of consolidating power in the State apparatus, particularly in the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Agriculture. To this end they worked, often obscurely, in minority positions, in the post-war governing coalitions and supported land programs which actually impeded their own subsequent collectivization drives.

The Communists went so far as to support, on countless occasions, the principle of private property. Thus, in 1945, the Hungarian Communist theoretician, Josef Reval, stated categorically: "There exists a material community of interest between the peasantry and labor: the preservation of the distributed land."¹⁶ And two months later Matyas Rakosi echoed his words, declaring, "We do not want kolkhozes, but strong and prospering small farms."¹⁷ And an organ of the Polish Communists, *Glos Ludu*, expressed itself very clearly in the same year:

The development of the village economy can not and will not be a copy of the Russian development. Our conditions are different; our national traditions are different as well. The difference is in the psychology of the Pole, and without doubt our Polish way of progress will be different.¹⁸

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REFORMS

Assured of full Communist support, the reforms were rapidly 423
implemented throughout the region. The most radical land alterations occurred in Hungary, where the land structure had been least

¹⁶ *Szabad Nep*, August 18, 1945.

¹⁷ *Szabad Nep*, October 16, 1945.

¹⁸ *Glos Ludu*, December 13, 1945.

423 affected by inter-war reforms. The Communist-dominated Ministry of Agriculture administered the land distribution (decreed March 17, 1945, following the Debrecen Conference), by the terms of which all holdings greater than 57 hectares were to be divided and all estates in excess of 570 hectares were to be expropriated outright. The resulting change was drastic: at one stroke the great Hungarian latifundia were destroyed (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
STRUCTURE OF HUNGARIAN LAND HOLDING
BEFORE AND AFTER POST-WAR REFORM *

Category (Cadastral Acres)	1935		1946	
	Percent of Landholdings	Percent of Area (total)	Percent of Landholdings	Percent of Area (total)
1-10	85.0	19.3	86.9	39.0
10-50	13.3	26.1	12.9	32.0
50-200	1.2	11.5	1.0	12.5
200-3000	0.4	21.0	0.2	12.4
Over 3000	0.1	22.1	0.0	3.2

* *Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv*, XV. Évfolyam, Budapest, 1948.

Under the terms of the reform 34.6 per cent of the total arable land was seized and redistributed. The land in possession of those peasants holding fewer than 10 cadastral acres doubled in size, and the land belonging to those holding more than 200 hectares was reduced by nearly two-thirds. Despite local excesses and Communist zeal, the peasants supported the expropriations enthusiastically.

An ominous sign of the future, hidden from the mass of the population at the time, was the sequestration of some of the seized lands for the creation of future state, model, and collective farms. Those farms listed in Table 3 over 3000 cadastral acres were already largely converted into State Farms by 1947, and by 1950 all those over 200 cadastral acres had been similarly converted.

The post-war land reforms in Poland were second in magnitude only to the Hungarian reforms. Approximately 4.6 million hectares

of agricultural land (18 per cent of the national total) were held ⁴²³ by farms of more than 50 hectares. By the decrees of September 8, 1944, and January 17, 1945, these lands were distributed among landless peasants and dwarfholders. But the majority of the lands distributed were seized in the so-called Western Territories, the former German districts of Silesia, Pomerania, and East Prussia (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
STRUCTURE OF POLISH LAND HOLDING
BEFORE AND AFTER POST-WAR REFORM *

CATEGORY OF HOLDING	1935		1946	
	Percent of Holdings	Percent of Total Area	Percent of Holdings	Percent of Total Area
1-5	64.2	14.8	61.2	26.6
5-10	24.8	17.0	27.1	38.8
10-50	10.5	20.9	12.6	33.2
Over 50	0.5	47.3	0.1	1.4

* Source: Moore, p. 82; *Rocznik Statystyczny, 1949*. (Warsaw, 1950), p. 58.

The specific Communist bias of the land reforms was evident in Poland as well as in Hungary. Forty per cent of the lands expropriated in the Western territories and 36 per cent in the rest of the new country were withheld from general distribution and set aside for the creation of State and communal farms.

In Romania the post-World War II reform was comparatively modest, affecting only one-third as much land as was affected by the 1919 reform. Eleven per cent of the land was still held by farms of over 100 hectares, and the decree of March 22, 1945, fixing the legal maximum at 50 hectares, did away with these larger estates. The Romanian reform paralleled those of Hungary and Poland in that for the time it respected the integrity of church lands. Royal lands were not expropriated until the monarchy was suppressed in 1947.

The land seized for redistribution in Czechoslovakia was

423 largely concentrated in the Sudetenland and southeast Slovakia where large German and Hungarian minorities had dwelt before the war. The expulsion of all German farmers and most Hungarian farmers in the post-war period resulted in the creation of a 2.6 million hectare land fund for distribution among landless peasantry and dwarfholders. It was not until 1947 that a law was passed which expropriated the properties of large Czech and Slovak land owners. A maximum of 50 hectares was decreed for all land holdings, as the result of which an additional 900,000 hectares was made available for general distribution.

Since the structure of rural society in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia was relatively egalitarian, the extent of the post-World War II reforms in both countries was small compared to those of Hungary, Poland and Romania. In Yugoslavia 850,000 hectares (six per cent of the land) was parcelled out among the peasantry, much of it derived from expropriated land held by German farmers in the Vojvodina. In Bulgaria, where no sizeable foreign element existed on the land, only 134,000 hectares (three per cent of the land) was redistributed among the poor peasants.

4. *The Results of the Reforms*

423 There is no doubt that the Communists manipulated the reforms to bolster their own position and prestige. In each country they controlled the Ministry of Agriculture and administered the land redistribution so that recipients of land felt obligated to the Communist Party. Communist popularity in the former Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia and in the Western Territories of Poland was very great after the war as a result. Furthermore, the diversion of a good portion of the expropriated lands to model and State Farms indicated that the Communists had no intention of forever relying upon an independent peasantry for their agricultural produce.

At the same time, however, there is no justification for the oft-heard contention that the land reforms were merely a prelude to collectivization, and that by dividing up the land the Communists hoped to create so many small and economically non-viable farms that private farming would become impossible. The lack of validity of this charge is clear from the fact that the post-World War I reforms had precisely the same impact on rural society and certainly the aim of those reforms was not to prepare the land for

collectivization. On the contrary, land reform deepened peasant attachment to the land by creating a larger class of land holders. Furthermore, careful study reveals that, the *average* size of the East European farm *after* the land reforms was not appreciably smaller than the average of non-estate holdings before the reforms. 423

That the Communists heralded the land reforms as a triumph for their cause only serves to indicate how demagogic and opportunistic was their behavior in Eastern Europe after the war. In fact, they only completed a land reform begun a quarter of a century earlier by non-Communist regimes. But the reform was portrayed in propaganda as a sudden and unprecedented blow to "feudalism" which only the Communists could have administered. In this way the Communists tried to steal the thunder of those parties in Eastern Europe who had for a quarter of a century fought for completion of land reforms. It was part of the cynical and devious route by which the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe were slowly making their way to full state power.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSFER OF THE SYSTEM

1. *The Communist Seizure of Power*

668 The assumption of totalitarian power by the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe in the years immediately following the Second World War was characterized throughout by a degree of administrative caution and bureaucratic circumlocution contrasting sharply with the bold tactics of early Leninist Communism. Where Lenin advocated the forthright "smashing" of the old State apparatus, the new generation of Communist tacticians favored its piecemeal suffocation and gradual substitution of a new regime. Where Lenin's Party proudly proclaimed its victory as a sharp historical break with the past,¹ the East European Communists made painstaking efforts to represent themselves as the legitimate heirs of national tradition.² And while Lenin's Party seized power on the crest of a giant revolutionary wave—culminating in the "Ten Days that Shook the World"—the East European Parties, operating in a virtual revolutionary vacuum, gingerly infiltrated their way into State power by diplomatic pressures, police intrigues, bureaucratic manipulations, and the implied threat of a foreign army.³

¹ The efforts these regimes made in the post-war years to maintain the fiction of legal and constitutional continuity with their predecessors also fit into this pattern. Indeed, with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia, it is impossible to establish a precise year—such as 1917 in Soviet history—when the Communists seized power.

² The East European Communist regimes frequently stress their native origins, and pose as the culmination of thousand-year-old national strivings. For example: the Czechoslovak Communist, Vaclav Kopecky, proclaimed at an ideological conference on February 27th, 1952, that "we Communists today are fulfilling the wishes of all true patriots of past generations. We are the heirs of the Hussite idea, and we are faithful to the highest traditions of the Czech and Slovak people." The very fact that the East European regimes were founded in the midst of intense Pan-Slavic and anti-Teuton demonstrations offers a key to their political psychology.

³ The contrast may be put very succinctly: while the East European Communist Parties could not have seized power without the aid of the powerful Red Army, the Russian Bolsheviks retained power despite the intervention of several foreign armies.

Indeed, there is considerable evidence to show that the Communists preferred to take power without the aid of genuinely revolutionary movements. The calculated policy of permitting the Nazis to destroy the powerful non-Communist but leftist Polish underground in Warsaw was one indication of the Communist fear of spontaneous and deeply rooted reform movements. As Mitrany points out, "When the Soviet armies first occupied territory in Eastern peasant countries, they did not attempt to use the peasants against the existing regime";⁴ instead they concentrated on seizing the centers of political power through which, in time, they were to introduce land reform by official fiat.

This wide divergence in revolutionary tactics between 1917 and 1944-45 arose from two factors. First, the spontaneous revolutionary forces in Eastern Europe were so weak that the Communists, with the aid of onrushing armies, could either defeat them or take them over. Second, the internal bureaucratization of the Communist movement which has occurred since Lenin's day made it imperative that the Communists rely primarily upon their own organization to affect events rather than upon the power of mass human forces. Consequently, they eschewed raising revolutionary slogans and adopted only those slogans which would help ease the path to organizational control.

These differences are of crucial importance in understanding the general course which the "East European Revolution" took, and the particular character of its agricultural policy.

Although Lenin's seizure of political power in 1917 was accompanied by a vast peasant-made reform of the Russian land system, he did not sanctify it with affirmations of his belief in independent peasant farming, as his more cynical East European successors were to do nearly 30 years later. Indeed, by decreeing nationalization of the land immediately after assuming power, Lenin made it clear that he considered individual peasant management of the land a transitional stage.⁵ Consequently, Bolshevik policy shifts in the

⁴ Mitrany, p. 179.

⁵ Theoretical opposition to the land reform as a serious solution to the agrarian problem remained a part of the international Communist policy throughout the twenties, and was abandoned only after the policy shift to the Popular Front (1934-35). Even in the Far East, where the urban proletariat was very small, Comintern agents adhered to this general line. Only in the early thirties, under Mao Tse-tung's leadership, did the Communists in the Far East begin to appreciate the revolutionary potential in the slogan of land reform. During the Popular Front era, when the Communists allied themselves with a variety of previously prohibited groups in Europe and elsewhere, they accustomed themselves to the demagogic opportunism they practiced with such skill after the Second World War. (See Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, New York, 1939).

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423 early years did not require the radical reorientations of the official attitude toward the peasantry and the land so characteristic of later policy in Eastern Europe. The concessionary New Economic Policy itself introduced in 1921, was invariably labeled a "retreat" imposed by circumstances, and Lenin left little doubt that "two steps forward" would follow this "one step backward." However, the post-war Communist Parties of Eastern Europe, empirical and opportunistic, swung with the political tides, professing convenient belief in any economic measures which would increase their political control.

661 These differences are not merely in the *tactics* of revolution, but rather in the changing character of Communism itself. In his volume, Mitrany emphasizes the increasing degree to which contemporary Stalinist Communists were preoccupied with the question of power.⁶ Whereas Bela Kun's dictatorship in Hungary in 1919 sacrificed political power partly because it refused to permit or encourage land reforms, Rakosi's post-war dictatorship appealed to popular support by expediting the reform of the land.⁷ Indeed, it was Rakosi himself who gave classic elaboration of the new political methods and spirit of Communism in his famous 1952 discussion of "salami tactics." Rather than defeating the Smallholders Party by frontal attack, he explained, they were defeated by ceaseless internal manipulations:

This gradual, day-by-day 'slicing off' of the reaction lurking within the Smallholders' Party was . . . termed 'salami tactics.' In the course of our incessant struggle against the enemy, its strength was gradually frittered away, and its impact on the working class was waning.⁸

"Salami tactics," then, describe the method by which opposition was suffocated by slow strangulation rather than by outright struggle. This policy demanded a degree of hypocrisy rarely required by Lenin's more forthright methods. Thus, the Bulgarian Communist, Anton Yugov, could declare in 1944 that "this Government, of which I am a member, and on whose behalf I speak, categorically

⁶ Mitrany, p. 170: "Whatever the theoretical pretenses that still surrounded" the Communist movement, he writes, "the issue [had] narrowed down to a question of sheer power."

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186: "In 1919 the Socialist groups victorious in Munich, Vienna, and Budapest had proclaimed the Marxist agrarian program and, so, quickly lost power; the new regimes controlled by the Communists after 1945 elaborately buried the program so as to retain power."

⁸ *Tavasalmi Szemle* (Budapest), March-April, 1952.

denies that it has any intention of establishing a Communist regime in Bulgaria." And Imre Nagy, the Hungarian Communist, was able to state in 1946 that the main struggle was not between "capitalism and socialism," but between "democracy and reaction *within* capitalism." Within a year or two both Yugov and Nagy were to repudiate these statements completely; but repudiation was impossible until the necessary maneuvers had taken place within the Government which made the Communists no longer dependent upon a minimum of popular acceptance. 661

This policy of revolution *from above* and *by degrees* influenced every aspect of East European Communist policy, and distinguished it from the earlier Soviet experience. It reflected the degree to which the East European Communist Parties were not indigenous groupings of revolutionary idealists, but agents of an expanding imperial system, bureaucratically organized, and highly regimented. Even in Czechoslovakia, where the Communists had important working class support, the seizure of power was engineered from the Ministry of Interior rather than fought in the streets. Elsewhere, working class support was either non-existent, as in Romania, or minimal, as in Poland, where 1946 shop elections showed the Socialists three times as popular among the workers as the Communists.

This absence of any genuine national support, and the close attachment of these bureaucratized parties to the Soviet military apparatus, made the use of "salami tactics" in the political realm absolutely necessary. The same factors applied to the Communist land policy. The Satellite Parties were no more capable of a Stalinist "offensive on the land," a frontal attack on peasant economy and society, than they had been of a Leninist assault on the centers of governmental power. The same process of "slow suffocation" which had brought the Communists to political power was the only weapon by which the Communists could alter the land structure.

2. *The Pattern and Pace of Collectivization*

The transfer of the Soviet agricultural system to Eastern Europe is a complex and many-sided story, the details of which vary greatly from one country to the next. In Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, for example, efforts to impose the Soviet pattern were begun immediately after the close of the Second World War, while in Poland and 423 661

* See Gluckstein, pp. 131-142, for a full account of the Communist attempt to pose as defenders of the *status quo* in 1944-45.

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661 Czechoslovakia no serious attempts were made until four years later. In Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, collectivization has profoundly altered the structure of agrarian economy, while in Poland the pre-Communist land system still remains substantially intact. In Yugoslavia and Bulgaria the collectivization drive, or at least the major effort, was compressed into a relatively short period of time, though elsewhere in the Satellite sphere the land offensive was diffused over several years. In Hungary, and to a lesser degree in Czechoslovakia, the 1953 agrarian crisis has forced the dissolution of an appreciable number of collective farms; but in Poland and Bulgaria the effects of this area-wide crisis, though real, are scarcely as inclusive. These variations in pattern are a reflection of the degree to which Satellite collectivization is a function, not primarily of Communist doctrinal predilections, but of specific local forces and conditions. The general goal was everywhere the same—subordination of free agriculture to the demand of urban-industrial Communist society—but in practice agrarian policies have never been entirely uniform. Among those forces and conditions affecting the pace and intensity of Satellite collectivization were such variables as the strength of the peasant traditions of independent farming, the position of the individual Satellite in the over-all Soviet economic design, the structure of the prevailing land system, the degree of planned industrialization, and the size and dynamism of the national party.

The intimate connection between Communist agricultural policy and the demands of a totalitarian industrial economy was first elaborated by Stalin himself in 1928, when he acknowledged indirectly that the primary goal of collectivization was the increased State share in agricultural production. The Satellite theoreticians were not as blunt as Stalin and usually clothed their economic designs in elaborate ideological terminology. Perhaps the most direct statement on the subject, however, was made by the Yugoslav economic planner, Boris Kidric, in 1947, at a time when his country was the most orthodox and militant of the Satellite states. "The business of agriculture in a Socialist society," he stated, "is to supply the towns and industrial centers with food."¹⁰

The variety of policies put forward in the ensuing years were derived from this basic goal. Much as the Communists attempted

¹⁰ Borba, (Belgrade), April 25, 1947.

to demonstrate that their policies were motivated by concern for the peasantry, it was clear that the question of ensuring "supply" of "food" for the cities remained the cornerstone of Communist agrarian policy. And though Kidric argued that to achieve this goal the Party was faced with the "categorical imperative of undertaking urgent measures to raise work productivity in agriculture," the hypocrisy of this statement was revealed by the simultaneous decision to allocate the barest minimum of national funds for the effort. Indeed, as the policy itself unfolded, it became clear that what Kidric meant was that it was the "business of agriculture in a Socialist society" to supply goods to the city at a price which the new urban bureaucracy was willing to pay, and that price was very low. Kidric's superior, Tito, was quite frank with regard to this problem: 423 661

In the same way as we must do our best to make ourselves independent of weather conditions in agriculture, so we must never allow ourselves the luxury of depending on the good will of private food producers. We must undertake measures to secure the necessary food for our industrial population and for carrying forward our Socialist projects. We must protect our food supply against chaos in production and distribution caused by the existence of tens of thousands of small and independent farms.¹¹

It was precisely to this extent that the Communists were interested in agriculture. If, in the process of "protecting" themselves from the "chaos" of "tens of thousands of small and independent farms," the level of agricultural production increased, the Communists would indeed be overjoyed; but such an improvement would be peripheral to the basic goal, which was redistribution of the crop rather than its improvement.

To implement this redistribution two courses were open to the State, only one of which was consistent with power realities in Eastern Europe and Communist industrial plans. 1) By increasing the flow of industrial goods from the city to the country, the Communists could stimulate the peasantry to place a greater share of their produce on the market. 2) By creating an agricultural structure through which the State could exercise direct administrative control, the Communists could force the peasantry to increase the share of goods marketed. It was the latter course which was consistent with the Eastern European political situation; and the Com-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1952.

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661 communists, with the Russian experience guiding them closely, followed it. The decision to collectivize was essentially the decision to pursue this path, for the increased exploitation of the peasantry implicit in it was the only path consistent with "carrying forward of our Socialist projects." The basic preparation for collectivization was therefore in the seizure or creation of those organs of repression through which the Communists could exercise the necessary political control.

The groundwork for post-war collectivization was consequently not laid in the countryside, where Communist influence in these early years was small and generally limited to the new State Farms, but in the cities, where the Parties slowly extended their control over the State apparatus. Once the levers of governmental power were secured, the Communists were able to exert relentless pressure on the farms.

The tactics of the East European Parties in this "offensive" phase were never military, except perhaps in Yugoslavia, where political conditions most closely paralleled those of the Soviet Union in the early Stalinist era. And even in Yugoslavia the chief weapon was slow economic strangulation of the peasantry, an erosive process designed to break the will to resist and in the end leave the class disunited, despairing, and helpless. The offensive tactics of the bureaucratically-minded Satellite Parties deserve more detailed exposition.

ECONOMIC PRESSURE

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471 This was the most direct means by which the Satellite Parties sought to destroy the independent peasant. Everywhere in the sphere compulsory tax and crop delivery schedules were promulgated, discriminating heavily against the independent sector, and particularly against middle and rich peasants. Collecting revenue was never a primary end of the tax decrees, though funds forced from the countryside were often considerable. Confiscatory delivery quotas served the additional and important function of guaranteeing supplies of foodstuffs for the urban-industrial centers. The primary economic end—the eventual bankruptcy of the individual producer, who in the early post-war years was still thriving by selling on the free and black markets—is well illustrated by the 1953 delivery schedules for Czechoslovakia. On the best land in the country a peasant with five hectares had to deliver three times as much grain to the State *per hectare* as a peasant owning two hec-

tares. On the poorest land in the country a peasant with five hectares had to deliver almost twice as much per hectare as a peasant with two hectares.¹² In Romania, a peasant with four hectares of land was required to deliver three-and-a-half times as much produce per hectare as a peasant holding two hectares of land.¹³ This pattern was followed throughout the area.

Prices paid for produce were invariably low and insofar as comparison is possible, lower than pre-war prices, as manifest in the huge discrepancies between free market prices and State prices. Moreover, the discrepancy between the prices paid to the peasantry and prices charged in retail shops for the same commodities far exceeded the cost of transportation and processing incurred by the State. In some cases a "coupon" system, ostensibly designed to compensate the peasant, was instituted. Under these terms, foodstuffs and industrial crops delivered to official collection centers were paid for by small sums in currency and coupons entitling the peasant to buy, at low controlled prices, in State shops. In practice, the system generally proved to be nothing more than a propaganda device. Since consumer goods were in short supply, and usually reserved for the urban market, the villages were frequently without such basic commodities as matches and kerosene.

Nevertheless, the confiscatory tax and delivery schedules were seldom fully enforced. It has, in fact, been demonstrated that literal enforcement was impossible, since in countless cases the State demands exceeded the individual peasant's capacity to produce. The quota levels and the severe legal punishments decreed for quota arrears were not, however, entirely unrealistic. The penalties prescribed for under-delivery were invoked only when it suited the regime purposes for a gradual extension of control over the agrarian economy. The effect of cumulative delivery failures was intended to reduce the independent peasant to the status of a tenant at sufferance, since he could be legally expropriated whenever the State chose.

The control the State exercised over industrial and financial sectors of East European economies was similarly an important weapon in the campaign against the peasant. As a result of heavy industrial emphasis, the agricultural sector was generally denied help from nationalized credit institutions. Insofar as credit was ex-

¹² Decree of the Ministry of Bulk Purchasing, January 30, 1953.

¹³ Scanteia, (Bucharest), May 18, 1950.

- 47) tended to agriculture at all, the State and collective farms received
 66) a disproportionate share. In effect, this policy meant the gradual depreciation of the meager equipment still owned by the peasantry, and further impeded the free peasant's purchase of vitally needed fertilizers and improved seed. This policy, it should be stressed, was an integral part of the general Communist tendency of neglecting agriculture as a whole.¹⁴

ADMINISTRATIVE FORCE

- 66) It is impossible to determine exactly the degree to which Satellite collectivization drives depended upon application of administrative or police force. The testimony of escapees, the observations of outside observers, the frequent regime admonitions against administrative divergence from the "voluntary principle," and many statements by Communist leaders on the subject in 1953 New Course speeches, make it clear that the role of force was considerable.¹⁵ At the same time the application of force in Eastern Europe did not approach in scale or intensity the frankly military offensive against the peasantry conducted in the Soviet Union in 1928-32.

Officially the Satellite regimes have always adhered to the "voluntary principle" of collectivization, invoking the principle whenever the regimes decided to decelerate collectivization. For example, when collectivization was halted in Bulgaria in mid-1950, the regime raised the "voluntary principle" to the level of a basic State doctrine.¹⁶ Likewise, the halt in collectivization in Poland in mid-1951 was accompanied by a series of trials of low-echelon Communists alleged to have resorted to the use of violence against the peasantry.¹⁷ In general, application of force—beatings, jailings, and occasional executions of "kulak terrorists"—was an important, but clearly secondary, collectivization method in the Satellites. Undoubtedly the intense scrutiny of international public opinion partly

¹⁴ See pp. 87-88 for a more extensive discussion of the investment schedules of the Satellite governments, and other issues relative to the balance between industry and agriculture.

¹⁵ For example, Imre Nagy, speaking on July 4th, 1953, acknowledged that in collectivization "too much bullying was used," which "not only offended the peasants' sense of justice but also caused serious economic harm." (*Szabad Nép*, [Budapest], July 5, 1953.)

¹⁶ An editorial in *Rabotnichesko Delo*, (Sofia), October 28th, 1950, stated, for example, that "The Communist Party has always stressed in the most categorical way that it is absolutely necessary to observe strictly the voluntary principle of entering collectives."

¹⁷ See, for example, the reports on the trials held in Gryfice (*Trybuna Ludu*, [Warsaw], May 25th, 1951).

accounts for the reluctance to apply force. Undoubtedly, too, the stern memories of the horrors of Soviet collectivization, which nearly cost the Stalinist regime its life, influenced developments in Eastern Europe and led to the refusal to take such risks once again.

But the basic cause lay in the nature of the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe. The East European Communist Parties did not possess the necessary reserves of mass fanaticism to draw upon in a frankly military onslaught; the cadres of experienced and zealous workers upon whom Stalin relied to enforce his campaign in 1928-32 simply did not exist. In addition, a blunt attack would have been entirely inconsistent with the slow and cautious approach embodied in the concept of "salami tactics."

SOCIAL PRESSURE AND PROPAGANDA

In the early post-war years the East European Parties sought to identify their own cause with the economic advancement of the peasant masses. Consequently, until 1948, militant propaganda in the countryside was confined to attacks on "Fascist collaborators," estate owners, and the "village rich."

With the consolidation of Communist power, the tenor of Party propaganda changed. The "kulak" was singled out for increasingly bitter treatment foreshadowing an offensive against the peasantry as a whole.

With the consolidation of political power in 1948-49, the tone of Party propaganda changed radically. Under the guise of purging the countryside of the "kulaks", it assumed an essentially anti-peasant tone. Vulko Chervenkov flatly stated that the peasants' "sense of private property" had to be eradicated, betraying the fact that collectivization was aimed at the entire peasantry, not merely at the "kulak."¹⁵ While the statistics indicate that a small class of

¹⁵ The term "kulak" as first applied in the Soviet Union denoted a specific group — those enterprising peasants whose growth the Czarist Minister Stolypin had encouraged before the war. The size of this group was greatly diminished by the egalitarianism of the 1917-18 peasant revolution, so that, even with the resurgence of the kulak in the NEP period of the twenties, the kulaks produced less than a third as much grain as they had produced before the war. Consequently, when Stalin raised the slogan, "the liquidation of the kulaks as a class," he was trying to capitalize on the traditional enmity toward a class whose significance no longer merited such wide attention. Clearly he was attempting to use the "anti-kulakism" of the peasantry as a blind under which a policy directed at a much larger group could be conducted. The term "kulak" no longer designated a specific group, but was directed against any group obstructing Communist land policy. The East European Communist picked up where Stalin had left off, and wielded the term even more damagingly.

661 well-to-do peasants had survived the post-war reforms, the size of this group was minuscule compared to the propaganda concentrated upon it. As the collectivization drive gained momentum, it became increasingly clear that the slogan of the "struggle to liquidate the kulaks" was largely an ideological cover under which a general onslaught against the entire peasantry was being waged.

"The distinguishing feature of this [agricultural] revolution," Stalin once said concerning Soviet collectivization, "is that it was accomplished *from above*, on the initiative of the State, directly supported *from below* by the millions of peasants."¹⁹ His formula was designed to distinguish the "agricultural revolution" from the "socialist revolution" of 1917, which presumably took its initiative *from below*. Therefore, one may assume that the emphasis in his formula is to be placed on its first clause (from above) rather than on the second (from below). The constant state of tension between the peasantry and the State in the years of collectivization is testimony to the reluctance of the peasantry to believe that the drive to "liquidate the kulaks" was being waged in their favor.

[668] The means by which the peasants expressed their antagonism to the agricultural policy were varied and the material on them is voluminous. The Romanian Party organ, *Scanteia*, described the forms which peasant resistance took in this fashion:

At the present time, the resistance of the capitalist elements [the peasantry] in our country takes various forms: the sabotage of the cultivation and sowing plan, the refusal to complete compulsory delivery quotas and to pay taxes, plotting against the collective farms and peasant partnerships, black market operations and artificially raising prices — going so far as the communication of rumors of the criminal character of arson and murder.²⁰

But the most direct evidence of the failure of Communist propaganda to win peasant support for collectivization was the economic apathy of the peasants and the continued impatience and fury of Communist propaganda. Since the regimes did not themselves resort to outright violence, neither did the peasants. But to the policy of slow economic suffocation the peasants countered a policy of passive resistance traditional among the backward peasantry of Eastern Europe.

3. The Economic Strategy of Collectivization

423 The effort to transform the East European countryside was

¹⁹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Short Course)*. (International Publishers, New York, 1939), p. 305.

²⁰ *Scanteia* (Bucharest), April 12, 1953.

PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS AND ACREAGE AROUND 1949*

(Percentage-wise Distribution)

I. Private Agricultural Holdings According to Size of Property.

HOLDINGS (IN HA.)	CZECHOS.	POLAND	HUNG.†	ROMANIA‡	BULGARIA	YUGOS.§
Midget: 0-2	46.5	28.8	68.6	53.1	29.2	} 65.0
Small: 2-5	23.5	32.5	18.9	22.9	38.6	
Medium: 5-10	17.1	27.1	8.5	17.9	25.4	21.3
Med. Large: 10-20	10.6	10.4	3.4	5.0	6.8	5.6
Large: 20-50	2.3	1.2	0.6	1.1		4.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	95.9

II. Respective Share in Total Private Farmland Acreage.

Midget: 0-2	7.9	6.0	23.1	—	6.7	} 34.0
Small: 2-5	17.9	21.5	27.3	—	30.9	
Medium: 5-10	27.2	38.8	22.4	—	41.5	31.3
Med. Large: 10-20	32.1	27.3	18.3	—	20.9	14.6
Large: 20-50	14.9	6.4	8.9	—		19.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	99.3

† Hungary: divisions are from 0-2.8 ha.; 2.8-5.7 ha.; 5.7-11.4 ha.; 11.4-28.7 ha.; 28.7-57.5 ha.

‡ Romania: divisions are from 1-3 ha. (instead of 1-2 ha.) and 3-5 ha.; (instead of 2-5 ha.).

§ Yugoslavia: divisions are from up to 5 ha.; 5-10; 10-15 (instead of 20 ha.) and over 15 ha.

C: J. Stejskal: Program Sčítání Zemědělských v.g. 1950 (Programme of the Census of Agricultural Holdings in 1950) in *Statistický Zpravodaj*, Vol. XIII, No. 2 (Prague), 1950, p. 46.

P: *Rocznik Statist.* 1949 (Statistical Yearbook), (Warsaw), 1950, p. 54.

H: *Gazdaságstatisztikai Tevékenység* (Econ. & Stat. Bull.) Vol. 1, No. 13 (Budapest), Dec. 1947, p. 696.

R: N.A. Golopentia & P. Onica: *Recensământul Agricol, Rep. Pop. Română* (The Agricultural Census) (Bucharest), 1948, p. 7.

B: *Mesečni Izveštaji na Glavna Direkta na Statistika*, (Monthly Bull. of the Gen. Direct. of Statist.) (Sofia), July 1947, p. 27.

Y: Milun Ivanovic: Cooperatives and Agricultural Development, *Review of Intern. Affairs*, Vol. IV, No. 13 (Belgrade), July 1953, p. 17 sq.

423 severely limited by the special character of East European Communism. Bureaucratic in spirit and cautious by temperament, it was neither able, nor did it seriously attempt, to destroy the basic configuration of rural society. As late as 1953, the peasant population remained essentially stable, though the regimes had siphoned off surplus rural manpower to the rapidly expanding industrial centers. The land massing of the farms, on the Soviet model, radically altering the peasant social structure, lay far in the future. The problem facing the Communist planner was the much simpler one of altering the social structure sufficiently to destroy the peasants' capacity to sabotage industrial "grandeur" planned for the new cities.

311 The land structure prevailing in Eastern Europe after the
423 reforms—the raw substance from which the Communists were to create collective farms — is described in Table 5. The following pattern emerges:

The number of "producing-consuming" units—agricultural holdings of five hectares and less, producing little surplus for the urban market — represented well over three-quarters of the total in Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, and perhaps two-thirds in Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. In this category, approximately 30 percent of the total holdings in Poland and Bulgaria, 50 percent in Czechoslovakia and Romania, and as much as 65-70 percent in Yugoslavia and Hungary were dwarf farms, barely capable of covering the needs of the family in possession.

The group of medium peasant holdings—peasant farms of approximately 5-10 hectares—were a significant category chiefly in Poland and Hungary where they represented approximately one-quarter of the total. These farms were of lesser importance elsewhere in the region.

The group of medium-large holdings—farms of 10-20 hectares—comprised six percent or less of the total throughout the region, reaching 10 percent only in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The large peasant holdings, or "kulak" farms—of 15-20 hectares and more—varied throughout the region, ranging from one to four percent of the total.

As for the proportionate share of the total arable land, the structure of private ownership had the following characteristics (see Table 6):

TABLE 6
FARMLAND OWNERSHIP IN OR AROUND 1949*
Number of Private Farms (in thousands)

HOLDINGS (IN HA.)		CZECHOS.	POLAND	HUNG.†	ROMANIA‡	BULGARIA	YUGOS.§
Midget:	0-2	696	962	1,404	1,636	316	} 1,495
Small:	2-5	351	1,084	387	707	418	
Medium:	5-10	255	906	174	551	276	490
Med. Large:	10-20	159	347	55*	154	74	129
Large:	20-50	35	39	27*	34	—	92
TOTAL		1,496	3,338	2,047	3,082	1,084	2,206

† Hungary: divisions are 0-2.8; 2.8-5.7 ha.; 5.7-11.4 ha.; 11.4-20 ha.; 20-50 ha.

‡ Romania: divisions in the first two groups are: from 0-3 ha.; and from 3-5 ha.

§ Yugoslavia: divisions are: 0-5; 5-10; 10-15; and over 15 ha.

* Source as in Table 5.

423 The "producing-consuming" units generally comprised
311 one-quarter to one-third of the farmland throughout the region,
but in Hungary almost one-half the total.

The medium units, of five to 10 hectares, occupied between one-quarter and one-third of the farm area.

The medium-large holdings controlled 20 percent, or less, of the farmland in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, and approximately 25 percent in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Finally, the large holdings—upwards of 15-20 hectares—totaled 10-15 percent of the private farmlands, except in Bulgaria where they did not exist, and in Yugoslavia where they formed close to 20 percent.

661 Since the Communists' primary problem was the extraction of
423 agricultural produce from the countryside, the focus of the contemplated agrarian reorganization had to be those viable, surplus-producing farms which traditionally supplied the cities with the produce necessary to their existence. And because it was precisely these farms which were best able to withstand the slow economic pressures of the State, and least interested in economic reform, the Communists had to prepare for a formidable struggle. In order to impose collective structure on these farms, it was necessary to discriminate against them in favor of the collectives. But this very discrimination—the refusal to supply credits, mechanical equipment, and fertilizers, and the collection of higher taxes and delivery quotas—tended to destroy their vitality and decrease the surplus produce in which the Communists were interested. So long, therefore, as these farms remained outside the collective structure, their value to the Communists was decreased as collectivization progressed. Similarly, the favorable treatment afforded the collective farms tended to decrease their basic value to the State. It was difficult to extract a high surplus of produce from farms with lower delivery quotas. These internal contradictions would inevitably continue so long as the process of collectivization itself was not completed, and the use of discriminatory tactics was necessary.

It is not altogether surprising that the Satellite planners never pursued an entirely consistent policy in this regard. In the early years, they tended to concentrate on absorbing the poorer farms into the collectives because they were most vulnerable to Communist pressure and appeal. Later, they tended to concentrate on those larger farms whose collectivization was crucial to the success

of their land policy. But no matter how they proceeded—and the 66/
 pattern differed from one country to another—they could not re-423
 solve the dilemmas posed by a slow paced collectivization. Had
 they been able to follow the Soviet model of full collectivization in
 several rapid and brutal campaigns, they might conceivably have
 avoided some of these pitfalls.

The chief surplus producing sector—the middle farms between 10 and 20 hectares—comprised some 900,000 units (See Table 6).
 The systematic dissociation of this stratum from the upper stratum
 of owners holding over 20 hectare holdings, and its methodical
 “fractionalization” represented one of the essential characteristics
 of the collectivization drive. It was *this* stratum of the farm popula-
 tion which the regime frequently labeled “kulak,” adjusting its
 definition as it became necessary in each situation. By 1950 it was
 clear that this stratum represented a challenge to the Communists
 not—as it was alleged—because its members hired farm labor to help
 work their lands, but because it constituted the producing backbone
 of the nation, a source of productive strength which the Com-
 munists were determined to turn to their own ends.

4. *The Strategy Unfolded*

The post-war expulsions of the *Volksdeutsche* and other Ger-
 man minority groups from Eastern Europe and the expropriation
 of their lands, together with those of Nazi collaborators, gave the
 early Communist-dominated regimes their first hold over the agrar-
 ian economy. Particularly in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugo-
 slavia the former German holdings formed the nucleus of the State
 Farms. Confiscation of the great latifundia in Hungary and of royal
 lands in Romania similarly created a reserve land fund on which
 the State could draw. In general, forest lands throughout the region
 were nationalized and administered by managerial panels created
 for that purpose. In addition, much pasture and meadowland was
 expropriated by a variety of legal devices, the over-all total equal-
 ling some two million hectares of first quality land. The State share
 in the combined forests, pasturage, and arable land of Eastern
 Europe ranged from 17 percent in Yugoslavia to 36 percent in
 Poland, and to as much as 41 percent in Czechoslovakia. Until 1949,
 the State farms still continued to play a minor role, except in Poland
 and Czechoslovakia where experiments along these lines were
 pushed very early.

During 1949-50 the State sector of agriculture expanded rapidly,

423 either by the simple process of extending existing land reserves, or
311 by acquisition—sometimes outright expropriation—of “kulak” lands
or communally-organized “model” farms. By the close of 1949,
State farms in Czechoslovakia, for example, had increased by 600
percent. By and large, however, the areas controlled by the State
farms—particularly in Hungary—contained a disproportionate share
of non-cultivated land (see Chart V).

In Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, the State sector com-
prised an area of considerable importance, and it was on the State
farms—theoretically, at least, the highest existing form of “Socialist
agriculture”—that the chief Communist hopes rested. It is, in fact,
the case that in the East European Satellites, State Farms achieved
a higher level of development in general than in the Soviet Union
at a comparable stage, since the initiative of the Russian peasantry
in 1917-18 prevented the large-scale land seizures on which a State
farming system could be based.

423 But in the Satellites, as in the Soviet Union, the primary effort
474 was devoted to the collective farm. In the Satellites, where the land
offensive had a thoroughly bureaucratic character, the collective
farms offered the additional advantage of *flexibility*. A variety of
collectivized farms were created to facilitate the peasants’ progress
from independent farming to full collectivity. Even the terms used
to describe the collective farms—“Agricultural Producers’ Coopera-
tives” in Poland, for example—were designed to blur the true im-
plications and to mask the ultimate purpose of collectivization.
Similarly, in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, the very name for collective
farms—*zadrugi*—was a calculated attempt to evoke memories of the
ancestral communal traditions of the southern Balkans.

Thus the regimes trod softly in the early years. In Czecho-
slovakia, for example, four types of “Uniform Agricultural Coopera-
tives” (UAC) were established from which the peasants—in accord-
ance with the “voluntary” principle—might choose:

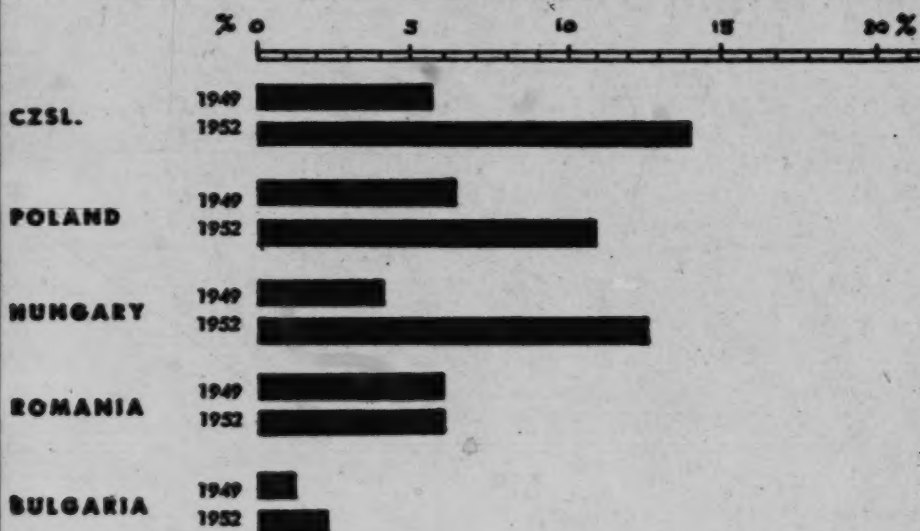
Type I Joint tillage of the land, but retention of title in real
property contributed, as well as in draft animals,
farm equipment, and the harvested crops.

Type II Joint tillage of the land, but title retained in real
property, draft animals, and farm equipment; all
boundaries plowed over, and plots grouped in “land

CHART V

GROWTH of STATE FARMS 1949 - 1952*

(percent of arable land)



* Rude Pravo, October 28, 1952; Rocznik Statist. 1949 (Warsaw), 1950; For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy! (Bucharest), January 30, 1953; March 17, 1950; September 11, 1953; Agrepress IVth Year (Bucharest), No. 2, January 17, 1953; Pari i Kredit (Sofia), No. 2, 1948, p. 80.

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compounds"; rent received on land, livestock, and equipment contributed.

Type III Joint tillage of the land and joint care of livestock; basic means of production *purchased* by the cooperative; rent still recognized, but limited to 10-20 percent of the total farm income—the remainder of income distributed according to work done.

Type IV Land and means of production common property; land rent abolished as "unearned income," and each member paid according to work units.

Type I is little more than a peasant partnership. Type IV is the true *kolkhoz*, patterned after the Soviet *artel*.

Similarly, in Poland four types were created, in Hungary and Romania three, in Bulgaria only one. The form stressed at any one period might vary from country to country as the needs of the State and the local strategy of collectivization demanded.

The proportion of collectives which are of the most advanced, or *kolkhoz*, type varied from one country to another. (See Table 7). In Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia the vast majority of collectives were of an intermediate character as late as 1951; in Romania and Poland, on the other hand, a majority were of the most advanced type.

TABLE 7
DISTRIBUTION OF KOLKHOZES IN COLLECTIVE SECTOR*
1949 - 1952

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF KOLKHOZY			% OF TOTAL PROD. COOP.		
	1950	1951	1952	1950	1951	1952
Czechoslov.	136	259	—	2.6	4.1	—
Poland	1,275	—	2,113	57.9	—	63.0
Romania	1,027	1,069	1,796	100.0	52.1	56.5
Yugoslav.	808	1,049	—	11.6	15.0	—

* C: 1950-1951, *Czech. Econ. Bull.*, Feb. 1, 1953, p. 264. 1952, *Rude Pravo* (Prague), Dec. 17, 1952.

* P: 1950, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), Jan. 7, 1951, 1952 (June), *Wies Leczbach. op. cit.*, p. 131.

* R: *Probleme Economice* (Econ. Problems), No. 5-8 (Bucharest), May-June 1953. Also: Gh Gh.-Dej in *For a Lasting Peace, etc.* (Bucharest), May 29, 1953.

* Y: G. J. Konrad, *op. cit.*

Though the multiplicity of collective forms might be taken to indicate a degree of concern for the individual predilections of the peasantry, the erratic course of Satellite collectivization—the fitful starts, jolts, and abrupt halts from year to year—indicates that the initiative always remained with the Bureaucratic Center. (See Chart VI. Had the peasants in fact ever desired collectivization, or had regime propaganda made appreciable headway in the countryside, a steady rise from 1948 through 1953 might have been expected. Instead, even a cursory study reveals a tendency toward “shock” collectivization and land massing in some years, and an equally abrupt levelling of the curve in other years. (See Table 8 and Chart VI).

BULGARIA

Cooperative farms, in rudimentary forms, existed in Bulgaria even before the First World War. With the advance of Soviet power into the Balkans, collectivization began afresh; with the exception of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria revealed itself as the most vulnerable of the Satellites. Thus, nationalization of basic industries, virtual suffocation of small enterprise, and firm establishment of a one-party regime were achieved by 1947. The political opposition was crushed, the people subjected to an oppressive State apparatus, and mass collectivization begun in earnest before the actual Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia had even begun.

Bulgarian collectivization may be characterized by three distinct stages: the first (1945-48) witnessed the rapid organization of the collective farm system and the establishment of at least one kolkhoz in each community; the second (1949-50), a period of “shock” collectivization without parallel elsewhere in the Satellite sphere, saw the expansion of existing collectives and the creation of hundreds of new collectives, and the third (1951-53) was a period of deliberate consolidation in which only slight efforts were made to extend agrarian control.

For Bulgaria the year 1950 was the turning point, the “spinal year” during which the pace of collectivization approached that of Soviet collectivization. More than 60 percent of the entire task of collectivization was completed in that brief 12 month period; the arable area controlled by the collectives rose from 11.3 to 40 percent of the total national land. The most striking feature of the 1950 Bulgarian offensive was not, however, the number of *new* farms added to the existing system, but the increase in *average size* of

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TABLE 8
PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND COLLECTIVIZED*
1945 - 1953

	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	June 1953	Dec. 1953
Bulgaria	3.0	3.5	3.7	6.0	11.3	43.0	47.5	51.0	51.7	51.7
Romania					0.1	2.7	8.1	7.2	7.5	7.5
Hungary					0.5	2.6	8.1	18.2	24.6	20.0
Czechoslovakia**					5.4	16.5	19.0	37.9	40.0	38.0†
Poland					0.3	2.2	8.5	4.8	6.7	6.7
Yugoslavia**		0.9	1.5	2.3	13.3	16.1	18.8	11.4	9.5†	—

* Sources for these figures are given in Tables 11 to 20.

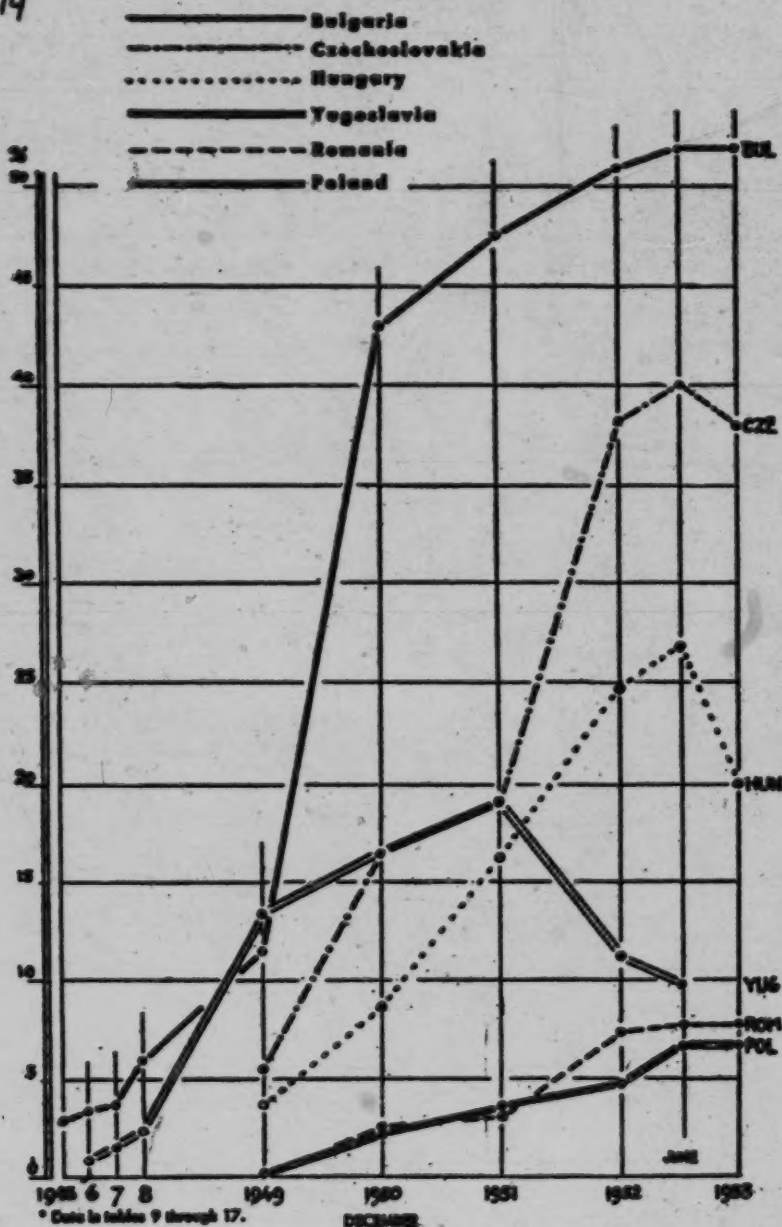
** Agricultural land, not arable land.

† The exact dimensions of the kolkhoz dissolutions which have taken place in 1953 in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia have not been made public; the figures given above are based on scattered evidence and official hints *Szabad Nép* [Budapest], Dec. 30, 1953, *Rude Pravo* [Prague], 19 December 1953, and G. J. Conrad, *Die Wirtschaft Jugoslawiens*, [Berlin, 1952].)

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CHART VI **COLLECTIVIZATION IN EASTERN EUROPE*** (Percent of arable land collectivized) 1948-1963



* Data in tables 9 through 17.

DECEMBER

TABLE 9
COLLECTIVIZATION IN BULGARIA*
1944 - 1953

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YEAR	NUMBER OF COL- LECTIVES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COL- LECTIVE†	AVERAGE SIZE COLLEC- TIVE†	HECTARES PER HOUSE- HOLD†	NUMBER HECTARES COLLEC- TIVIZED	PERCENT OF FARMS	PERCENT ARABLE LAND
1944	110								
1945	382	272	34,362	90	383	4.2	146,570	3.1	3.0
1946	480	98	41,027	85	359	4.2	172,498	3.7	3.5
1947	549	69	44,100	80	327	4.1	180,040	4.0	3.7
1948	1,100	551	78,900	72	265	3.7	292,380	6.7	6.0
1949	1,608	508	156,483	97	343	3.5	551,572	14.3	11.3
1950	2,587	979	525,628	203	809	4.0	2,092,215	48.0	43.0
1951	2,739	152						51.0	47.5
1952	2,739	0						52.0	51.0
1953	2,747	8	568,989	207	915	4.4	2,512,500	52.3	51.7**

* *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), May 29, 1950, January 1, 1951, October 28, 1951, January 6, 1953; *Zemledelsko Zname* (Sofia), December 3, 1952, December 2, 1953.

** The figure given by the regime since 1952 for the percentage of arable land is 60.5, and this figure has gained general acceptance among Communist theoreticians and many Western observers. However, it is clear that the figure 60.5 measures a different arable land area than was used in computing the earlier percentagewise figures. The percentages given for 1949 and 1950 indicate that the arable land at the time was approximately 4.9 million hectares; but the 1952 percentage indicates arable land of only 4.15 million hectares. Since the regime has frequently claimed a steadily expanding area of cultivation, this statistical juggling does not make any sense. Therefore, this chart bases its 1952 and 1953 percentagewise calculations upon the same arable land figure used by the regime prior to 1952.

† Calculated on the basis of official data.

the collectives themselves, a rise of some 200 per cent. In this respect ⁴²³
 Bulgarian collectivization parallels subsequent events in Hungary, ⁴⁷⁴
 where the creation of new farms was accompanied by the rapid
 growth in the size of the average unit.

Bulgarian collectivization was largely concentrated in the fertile plains north and south of the Balkan Mountains, particularly in the black-earth region of the Southern Dobrudja acquired from Romania after the Second World War. (See Chart IX). Nevertheless, the average size of the farms incorporated into the collectives appears to be little larger than the average of those poorer farms still free. On the face of it, the facts are difficult to explain since the regime continues to concentrate on the richer farms—those producing effectively for the market, though less vulnerable to economic attack—and these, in turn, might be expected to be the middle-sized farms, and larger, in accordance with the general rule throughout the area.²¹ The explanation for this paradox is perhaps to be found in the special conditions of local agriculture. In Bulgaria, the most valuable farmlands are not necessarily the holdings of largest acreage.

Thus, in Bulgaria, variations above or below the average are seldom extreme. The uniform structure of the pre-war agrarian economy has impelled the regime to mass small *rich* units, rather than proceed against holdings of any one class.

Significantly, the country which has had the most success in collectivization was the one which found it unnecessary to resort to a wide range of collective forms. Bulgaria has only one form—approaching the Soviet *kolkhoz*.

ROMANIA

To date collectivization in Romania has proceeded more cautiously than in any other Soviet Satellite, excepting only Poland. The paradox of Romanian collectivization is thus that the nation is geographically and politically subject to the most direct and ponderous of Soviet pressures. Yet the "Socialization" of agriculture is little advanced. It is clear from the Romanian evidence that Sovietization is in no sense a uniform process nor collectivization entirely a doctrinaire program; politically Romania fell to the Communists very early in the post-war struggle, but evidently the nation

²¹ According to a Soviet source, "in Bulgaria the majority of the members of the . . . cooperatives are middle peasants." (V. Tikhomirov, *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, Nov. 10, 1953, p. 89).

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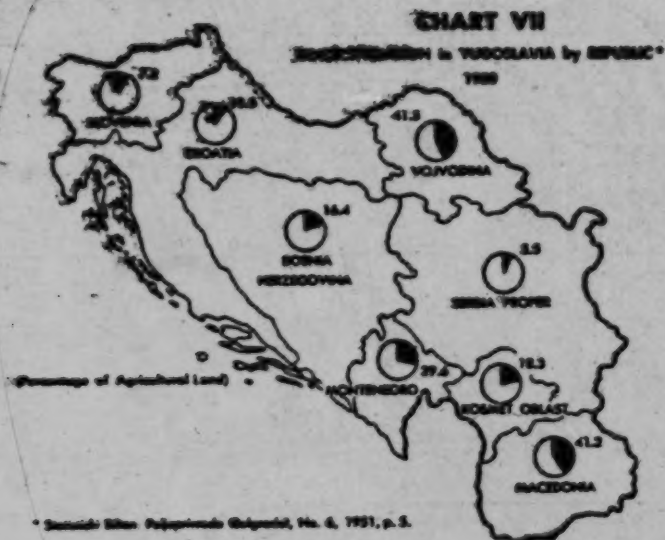
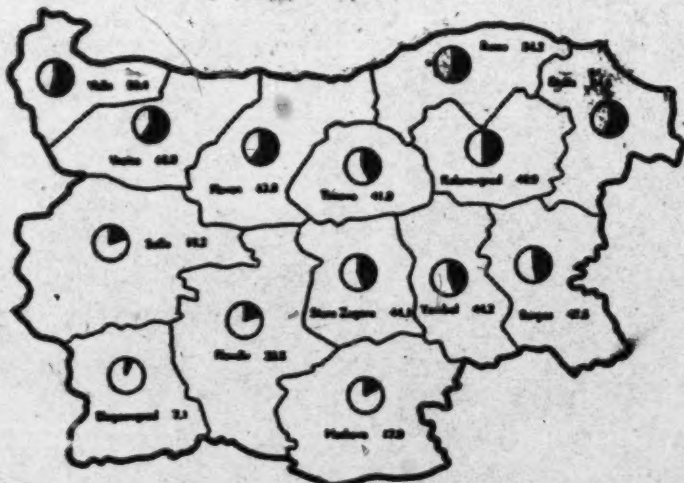


CHART IX COLLECTIVIZATION IN BULGARIA BY DISTRICT

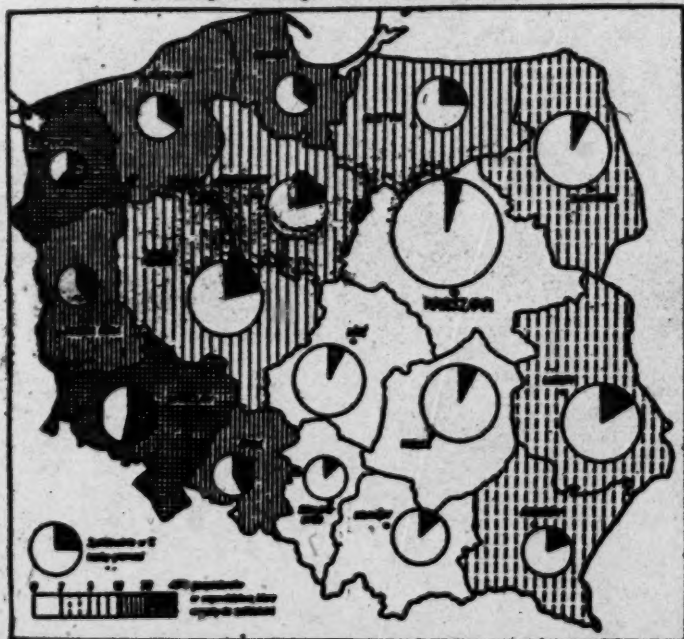
(Percentage of Villages with Collective Farms)



* Statistics from Report on Bulgaria,
Institute National d'Etudes et Economiques (Paris), November 1, 1950.

CHART X COLLECTIVIZATION IN POLAND BY PROVINCE

(Percentage of Villages with Collective Farms)



* Ekonomika (Warsaw) 3rd quarter, 1953.

TABLE 10
COLLECTIVIZATION IN ROMANIA*
1949 - 1953

YEAR	NUMBER OF COL- LECTIVES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COL- LECTIVE‡	AVERAGE SIZE COLLEC- TIVE‡	HECTARES PER HOUSE- HOLD‡	NUMBER HECTARES COLLEC- TIVIZED	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND
1949	58	58	4,058	72	—	—	12,500†	0.1
1950	1,027	971	67,719	66	281†	4.0	268,000	2.7
1951	1,069	42	75,065	70	277†	—	300,000†	3.1
1952	1,796	727	165,411	92	360†	—	700,000†	7.2
1953 (June)	1,980	184	185,000	90	369	4.1	732,000	7.5

* Speech of Minister of the Army Botnarus, *Scantia* (Bucharest), December 31, 1953; *Scantia*, April 12, 1953; Speech of Premier Gheorghiu-Dej, *Scantia*, August 23, 1953; *Scantia*, March 1, 1953; *Probleme Economice*, (Bucharest), No. 5-6, May-June, 1953; *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, (Moscow), No. 10, 1953.

† These are estimates, calculated on the basis of known ratios between number of collectives, number of hectares collectivized, and number of households.

‡ Calculated on the basis of official data.

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has presented its rulers with singular economic and organizational problems.

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The two crucial years of Romanian collectivization were 1950 and 1952; these two offensive years alternated with periods of quiescence. In 1952, more than 50 percent of the total area collectivized to date was brought into the "Socialist sector," and in the same year the size of individual collective farms themselves increased rapidly. Though the number of new collectives increased by only 75 percent, the area brought into collectives increased by over 130 percent.

In accordance with the general East European patterns, the Romanian collectives were composed of a high percentage of medium farms, a percentage which increased each year (see Table 11). In 1953, the middle farmers comprised 57.8 percent of the total, the small farmers 35.2 percent, and landless farmers the remaining 7.0 percent. While the average size of all Romanian farms is 3.6 hectares, the average size of farms brought into collectives is 4.0 hectares.

TABLE 11
DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS WITHIN
ROMANIAN COLLECTIVE SECTOR*
1949-1953

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	1949-50	1951	1952	1953
Medium farmers	32.0	29.4	53.0	57.8
Small farmers	62.4	39.0	37.4	35.2
Landless farmers	5.6	31.6	9.6	7.0

* *Probleme Economice* (Bucharest) No. 5-6, May-June, 1953; *Novs Mysl* (Prague), No. 10, 1953.

A unique feature of Romanian collectivization is the establishment of a very "primitive" type of collective, the "Agricultural Associations." Whereas the other countries issue agricultural decrees with a single standard for the entire collective sector, the Romanian agricultural decrees usually distinguish between "Agricultural Associations" and collectives. Including the "Agricultural

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TABLE 12
COLLECTIVIZATION IN HUNGARY*

YEAR	NUMBER OF COL- LECTIVES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COLLECTIVE†	AVERAGE SIZE OF COLLEC- TIVE†	HECTARES PER HOUSE- HOLD†	HECTARES COLLEC- TIVIZED	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND
1949	1,520	980	37,000	24	137	5.7	206,000	3.7
1950	2,500	1,233	90,000	36	176	4.1	440,000	8.2
1951	4,652	2,152	236,500	51	187	3.7	865,000	16.0
1952	5,315	663	318,500	59	258	4.3	1,374,000	24.6
1953 (April)	—	—	340,000	—	—	4.4	1,494,000	26.8
1953 (Dec.)	4,677	-638	238,000†	51	250	4.7	1,117,000**	20.0

* *Statistikai Szemle* (Budapest) — various numbers, 1950; *Szabad Nep*, January 25, 1950, January 21, 1951, October 27, 1950, February 26, 1951, December 2, 1951; December 16, 1952, May 11, 1953; Radio Budapest, December 29, 1953.

** Estimated on the basis of the known arable land.

† Calculated on the basis of official data.

Associations", and the State Farms, the "Socialist sector" in Romania comprises 25 percent of the arable land.

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HUNGARY

Collectivization in Hungary proceeded at a steadier pace than elsewhere. The tempo accelerated in 1952 and 1953, but land policy was not characterized by the abrupt twists and turns so pronounced in Romania and Czechoslovakia. Hungarian collectivization paralleled the Romanian and Bulgarian in that acceleration of the drive was accompanied by rapid expansion of the average size of the collectives themselves. Thus, the average collective organized in 1949 comprised an area of only 135 hectares; in 1952 the average new collective was 770 hectares — an increase of over 500 percent!

Again, in accordance with the general rule, the primary target of Hungarian collectivization was middle-sized farms. The average number of hectares per collectivized household (4.4) surpassed the national pre-collectivization average (2.8). Before the wholesale dissolutions attending the Hungarian New Course, the collectivized sector occupied 26.8 percent of the arable land. Three types of collective farms exist in Hungary; the highest class, however, is not as "advanced" as the Soviet artel.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In terms of pace at least, Czechoslovak collectivization represents a remarkable achievement—if East European rather than Soviet standards are applied. Despite a late start, the agricultural offensive proceeded more rapidly in Czechoslovakia than in any other Satellite, excepting only Bulgaria.

The land offensive was mounted in two waves, one in 1950 and the second in 1952. Unfortunately, reliable statistics on Czechoslovak collectivization are extremely sparse so no clear picture emerges. Only 1953 figures are available for the number of households collectivized, and these indicate that the land drive was aimed at absorbing the larger, more productive units. At the end of 1952, more than 56 percent of the middle farmers were in collectives of Types III and IV, while only 40 percent of the small farmers were members. For the actual distribution of farm-types in the collective sector as it changed between 1949 and 1953 see Table 14 and for the geographical distribution of the collectives see Chart VIII.

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TABLE 13
1949 - 1953
COLLECTIVIZATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA*
(Types II, III, and IV)

YEAR	NUMBER OF COL- LECTIVES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COL- LECTIVE†	AVERAGE SIZE COLLEC- TIVE†	HECTARES PER HOUSEHOLD†	NUMBER HECTARES COLLECTI- VIZED	PERCENT OF AGRICUL- TURAL LAND
1949	1,700‡	1,700	—	—	—	—	375,000	5.4
1950	3,760	2,060‡	—	—	302	—	1,134,392	16.5
1951	4,452	682	—	—	293	—	1,305,610	19.0
1952	7,290	2,838	—	—	356	—	2,598,073	37.9
1953**	8,284	994	343,911	41	—	8.4	2,900,000‡	40.0

* J. Nepomucky, *Rude Pravo* (Prague), February 15, 1953; *Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin* (Prague), February 1, 1953, pp. 15-16; *Rude Pravo*, December 17, 1952.

** This figure represents the high point in Czechoslovak collectivization; by the end of 1953 the number of collectivized households had fallen off slightly (see speech of Agricultural Minister Uher, printed in *Rude Pravo* (Prague), December 19, 1953).

† Calculated on the basis of official data.

TABLE 14
DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS WITHIN
CZECHOSLOVAK COLLECTIVE SECTOR*
 — 1953 —

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FARM UNIT (IN HECTARES)	PERCENT OF TOTAL FARMS COLLECTIVIZED
0-0.5	10.8
0.5-2	22.4
2-5	26.9
5-10	23.5
10-15	13.0
Over 15	3.4
	100.0

* *Zemelské Noviny* (Prague), May 1, 1953.

POLAND

For a variety of reasons, the impact of collectivization in Poland has been slight. The State farms, organized immediately after the Second World War, controlled nearly twice as much arable land as all collectives formed by mid-1953. In central Poland—that is to say, in the regions of Poland's pre-war territories still remaining (excluding the formerly German districts in the West)—collectivization has hardly been invoked. The majority of Polish collective farms are situated in the old German regions of Silesia, Pomerania, and East Prussia—where the transfer of populations, confiscation of German properties, and firm Party political control made collectivization far easier.

Whether the vigorous land drive launched in early 1953 (and since slowed down in accordance with Satellite-wide political and economic policies) would have resulted in the rapid expansion of the collective sector is now impossible to say. In Poland, the average size of farms collectivized far exceeded the early post-war national average—approximately 7.5 hectares per holding as against 5.9. Thus, the weight of the Polish farm offensive was directed

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TABLE 15
COLLECTIVIZATION IN POLAND*
1949-1953

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YEAR	NUMBER OF COL- LECTIVES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COL- LECTIVE†	AVERAGE SIZE COLLEC- TIVE†	HECTARES PER HOUSEHOLD†	NUMBER HECTARES COLLECTI- VIZED	PERCENT OF FARMERS	PERCENT OF AGRICUL- TURAL LAND
1949	243	243	—	—	226	—	54,830	—	0.3
1950	2,199	1,946	49,500	23	218	9.4	467,611	1.4	2.2
1951	3,054	853	71,000	23	239	10.1	728,561	2.1	3.5
1952	4,900	1,846	100,000	20	204	10.0	1,000,000	3.1	4.8
1953‡	7,982	3,082	189,000	24	175	7.4	1,400,000	5.9**	6.7

* Instytut Ekonomiczny Rolnej, *Wies w Leczach* (Warsaw, 1952); *Economists* (Warsaw), III, 1953; *Zycie Gospo-
darzce* (Warsaw), September 6, 1953.

‡ Official collectivization statistics for 1953 are extremely confused and contradictory. The figures presented here are for June, 1953; in subsequent months different figures were released, but they were so inconsistent that the June estimates are employed here. During the summer of 1953 collectivization came to a halt in Poland, and hence the situation remained approximately static throughout the rest of the year.

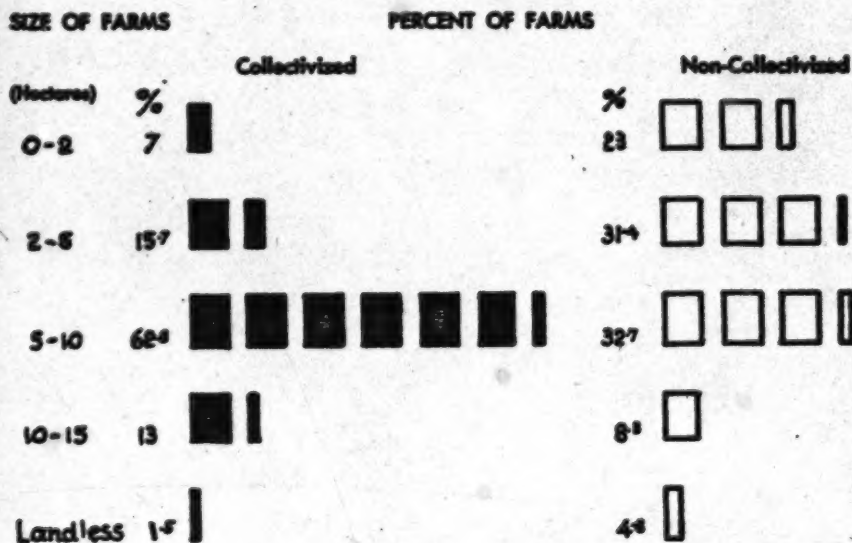
** Estimate.

† Calculated on the basis of official data.

CHART XI

COMPOSITION of COLLECTIVIZED
and NON-COLLECTIVIZED SECTORS
in POLAND 1953*

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* Nowy Dziennik, (Warsaw) No. 10, 1953, p. 183.

423 against the efficient, surplus-producing farm units. A comparison
474 of the collectivized and free sectors in 1953 is set out in Table 16. While only 40 percent of the independent farms were larger than five hectares, slightly more than 75 percent of those collectivized were drawn from this category.

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TABLE 16
DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS IN
POLISH COLLECTIVE SECTOR*
— 1951 —

FARM UNIT	PERCENT OF FARMS COLLECTIVIZED
Landless	5.8
0 - 2	6.1
2 - 5	14.2
5 - 10	62.8
10 - 15	10.2
Over 15	0.9

* *Wies w Leczach* (Warsaw, 1951), p. 131.

423 In Poland the collective sector controls 6.7 percent of the total
474 arable land, as against almost 12 percent organized into State Farms. Four types of collectives exist in Poland; the most developed type approaches the Soviet *artel*.

YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslav collectivization is concentrated in two regions: the rich Vojvodina plain, north of Belgrade, traditionally the source of the greatest farm surpluses, and the poor mountainous regions of Macedonia in the South, where land hunger and poverty were extreme (see Chart VII). The collectivization of the Vojvodina was important precisely because of its capacity to produce a marketable surplus for the expanding cities. The collectivization of Macedonia was possible because peasant resistance was slight. In this two-pronged attack, the Yugoslav Communists adhered to the general lines of agrarian policy throughout the Soviet orbit. 423
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Collectivization in Yugoslavia presents an interesting picture of paradoxical extremes. Prior to its 1948 expulsion from the Cominform, and for a short time thereafter, the Yugoslav regime was the most "advanced" of the Soviet Satellites, swiftly smashing the political opposition, launching a massive program of heavy industrial development, and nationalizing the major economic facilities at an early date. But in 1951, after an interval of indecision, the regime embarked on a program of concession and retrenchment which, in many significant respects, anticipated the New Course later adopted by the entire Soviet sphere.

In common with Bulgaria, the first organizational basis for collectivization was laid down immediately after the war, and the major offensive launched in 1948-49. Moreover, like Bulgaria, the first break in the offensive occurred in 1950. However, the pause in Bulgarian collectivization represented nothing more than a period of consolidation, while the Yugoslav halt grew into the first slow recognition that political and social conditions in Eastern Europe would not permit repetition of the Soviet experience.

The first reaction of the Yugoslav regime to the break with the Cominform was to accelerate the pace of collectivization. Virtually 60 percent of Yugoslav collectivization was achieved in 1949 alone (See Table 17). And if the tempo of collectivization did not reach the pitch attained in neighboring Bulgaria, the struggle between the regime and the peasantry was, if anything, more intense. But it is clear by now that the stubborn resistance of the Yugoslav peasantry—partly responsible for the catastrophic agricultural failure of 1950—was not the only factor working for revision of agrarian policy. A great deal of the dynamism which animated the East European Communists was derived from its Soviet connection.

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TABLE 17
COLLECTIVIZATION IN YUGOSLAVIA*
1946 - 1952

YEAR	NUMBER OF COLLECTI- VES	NUMBER FORMED YEARLY	NUMBER HOUSE- HOLDS	HOUSE- HOLDS PER COLLECTI- VE**	AVERAGE SIZE COLLECTI- VE**	HECTARES PER HOUSEHOLD**	NUMBER HECTARES COLLECTI- VIZED	PERCENT OF AGRICUL- TURAL LAND
1946	494	494	25,082	51	246	4.8	121,518	0.9
1947	779	285	40,590	52	270	5.2	210,986	1.5
1948	1,318	539	60,153	46	246	5.4	323,987	2.3
1949	6,625	5,307	340,739	52	278	5.4	1,839,978	13.3
1950	6,968	343	418,659	60	318	5.3	2,226,166	16.1
1951	6,994	26	429,784	62	371	6.0	2,595,000	18.8
1952	6,908	-86	-	-	267	-	1,580,000	11.4

**Informations Friucnik*, (Belgrade), Vol. I, p. 767; *Review of International Affairs*, (Belgrade), Sept. 16, 1952, pp. 16-18; October 1, 1952, pp. 17-18; G. F. Conrad, *Die Wirtschaft Jugoslaviens* (Berlin, 1953).

**Calculated on the basis of official figures.

When these ties were severed in 1948, the Yugoslav Party began to lose much of its initial fanaticism and grew more complacent about its "historic tasks." 423 474

The revision of Yugoslav agrarian policy in 1951-52 coincided with a relaxation of strenuous efforts to industrialize the country and a slight liberalization of the centralized dictatorship. When Tito stated in 1952 that long-neglected agriculture was to receive increased State assistance, the drive for collectivization inevitably lost much of its original meaning and force. The kolkhoz was primarily an administrative device to insure increased extraction of produce from the land at low State-determined prices, and if the State intended to increase investment in agriculture, the collectives were no longer a prime necessity.

5. Summary

A. This paper has made note of many of the important differences between collectivization in Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia—the greater reliance upon persuasion as opposed to force, the reluctance to open a full-scale offensive against the peasantry, the greater variety of collective forms and the greater flexibility of their usage. However, these were deviations from an historical norm to which the East European Communists were obligated for most of their inspiration. The enormous influence which the Soviet experience exercised upon them was evidenced not merely in the internal structure and organization of the emerging collective farms, but in their basic proportions (see Chart XII). With the exception of Bulgaria and Poland, the basic lines of the East European farms adhered to the pattern set by the Soviets. In the USSR the average collective covered 490 hectares of arable land; it was composed of 78 households; and each household tended 6.3 hectares of land.²² The size of the Soviet collectives, and the area per household, slightly exceeds the average for Eastern Europe, but the proportions are so close to one another that the direct influence of the Soviet model cannot be doubted (except possibly in Bulgaria and Poland).

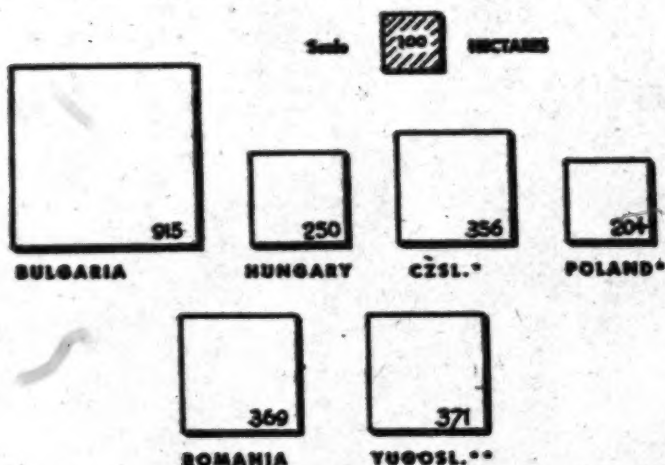
The peculiarity of the Bulgarian collective structure is explained by the centralization of each collective around one rural community with the subdivisions of control stemming from that community. The extremely small proportions of the Polish collec-

²² Harry Schwartz, pp. 266-267.

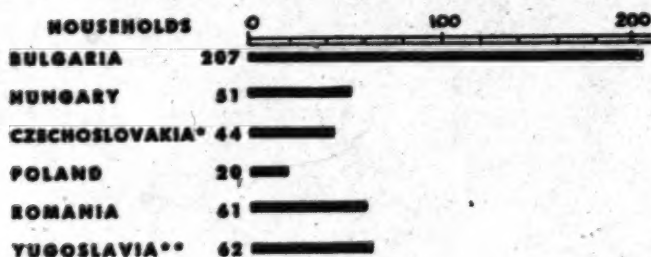
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CHART XII

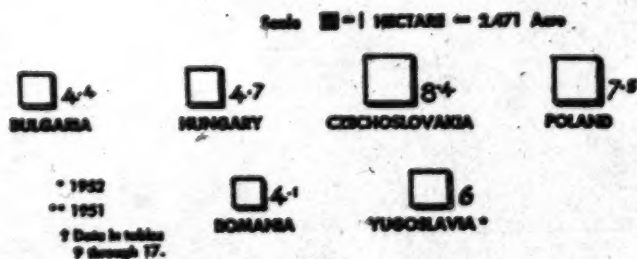
AVERAGE SIZE of COLLECTIVES 1953*



AVERAGE NUMBER of HOUSEHOLDS in a COLLECTIVE 1953



AVERAGE HECTARES per HOUSEHOLD in a COLLECTIVE 1953



p. 80

tives can only be explained by the great difficulties encountered in the whole Polish collectivization effort.

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It should be noted that the countries with the largest average area per collectivized household are Poland and Czechoslovakia, while the countries with the smallest are Bulgaria, Romania, and finally, Hungary. The reason for this wide range does not lie in the original land structure, since the average collectivized property does not correspond to the average household area of the non-collectivized farms in the respective countries. The difference, then, probably reflects the success of the Polish and Czechoslovak regimes in collectivizing the larger, and more productive, holdings.

TABLE 18
SPHERE-WIDE COLLECTIVIZATION*
June, 1953

COUNTRY	HECTARES OF ARABLE LAND	HECTARES OF COLLECTIVIZED LAND	PERCENT OF LAND COLLECTIVIZED
Bulgaria	4,860,000	2,513,500	51.7
**Czechoslovakia	6,860,000	2,900,000	40.0
Hungary	5,550,000	1,500,000	26.8
Yugoslavia	13,800,000	1,500,000*	10.9
Romania	9,750,000	732,000	7.5
Poland	20,760,000	1,400,000	6.7
Total	61,520,000	10,545,000	17.2

*Data in Tables 11 through 20.

**For both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia the figures are given in hectares of agricultural land, not arable land, because the most consistent and reliable data are given in these terms. The effect on the percentage figures in the right-hand column is slight, if any.

***Estimated on the basis of regime statements. See G. J. Conrad, *Die Wirtschaft Jugoslawiens*, (Berlin, 1952).

B. In mid-1953, when collectivization was simultaneously halted throughout the Soviet sphere, approximately 17 percent of the arable land of Eastern Europe had been brought into the collectivized

423 sector (see Table 18). Roughly another 10 percent belonged to the
474 State Farms, bringing the total arable land in the "Socialist sector"
to approximately 27 percent.

In other words, in over four years of feverish effort the Communist governments of Eastern Europe had not achieved what the Soviet government had accomplished in less than four months of its collectivization drive in 1929. As Table 18 indicates, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia achieved the most significant results; Romania and Poland lagged far behind. Yugoslavia and Hungary, which had done moderately well at one time, were to see the results of years of labor washed away in the onrushing New Course.

This failure was all the more notable for the fact that the Satellite governments had at their disposal not only the lessons of the Soviet experience but direct Soviet supervision as well. Certainly the bureaucratic methods employed by the Eastern European Communists, both in taking power over a silent people and in the process of collectivization itself, were partly responsible for this failure. In the next chapter some of the economic mechanics of the new agricultural order will be discussed and perhaps additional light will be thrown on the emerging debacle.

CHAPTER IV

THE BALANCE SHEET OF COLLECTIVIZATION

1. General Factors

Earlier in this study¹ it was pointed out that the Stalinist ⁴⁷¹
"solution" to the agricultural problem in the Soviet Union, despite ⁴²³
its cost in human suffering, satisfied the basic agricultural needs of
an expanding heavy industrial machine and the State which rested
upon it. The new land structure was no more efficient or productive
than the one it had replaced; but it was better suited to guarantee
urban food supplies and the rapid accumulation of capital which
was the prerequisite for the heavy industrial development upon
which the new Soviet State was based. That certain readjustments
in that land structure are being called for today, more than a quarter
of a century after its initial establishment, does not indicate that,
in terms of its original goals, the program was a total failure.²

In Eastern Europe, however, the agricultural picture is far
more complex. A conclusive assessment of the results of collectiv-
ization in terms of the Communists' own goals is therefore more
difficult. The extensive agricultural readjustment begun in the
middle of 1953 has frequently been interpreted as proof of its
failure. However, since the New Course in Eastern Europe was
promulgated simultaneously with a similar program in the USSR,
its origins may lie as much in the political crisis caused by Stalin's
death as in a mounting economic crisis. Indeed, the vast economic
disproportions which the New Course was designed to reduce had

¹ See above pp. 21-2.

² These readjustments were announced in September 1953, by the Soviet
leader Khrushchev in the same address in which he acknowledged the dismal
condition of Soviet agriculture, and in particular the livestock inadequacies
(*Pravda*, [Moscow], September 15, 1953).

423 existed for a considerable period before the new measures were introduced.¹

To assess the results of collectivization in Eastern Europe it is necessary to apply the same measuring rod applied to the Soviet Union: to what degree did collectivization facilitate the task of increasing the State's share of the total agricultural product without a proportionate increase in agricultural investment?

This was, in fact, the exact criterion to which Boris Kidric, the Yugoslav economic planner, was referring when he declared in 1947 that the "business of agriculture in a Socialist society is to supply the towns and industrial centers with food."² If, despite every other failure, collectivization has expedited this "supply," it has justified itself in Communist eyes.

311 As in the USSR, land reorganization in Eastern Europe has not
423 resulted in an appreciable increase in East European farm productivity; in many instances, the reverse has been true. That the pre-war levels of agriculture have not yet been regained in Hungary is now freely admitted by Hungarian Communist spokesmen.³ The Polish theoretician, Stefan Jedrychowski, in a revealing analysis of post-Stalin policies, acknowledged that "in Romania, as well as in Czechoslovakia, agricultural production as a whole has not yet reached the pre-war level, although, for example, it has in the case of cattle."⁴ Polish Premier Bierut confessed that the situation in Poland was not very healthy compared to pre-war standards.⁵

241 Indeed, the conclusions of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), issued in 1952 long before the New Course policies, and based upon many unofficial sources, seems generous in retrospect: "All countries in the region," the FAO report stated, "with the exception of Poland, were at, or only slightly below, the pre-war level of agricultural production, and for the

¹ It has been suggested by many that the New Course of 1953 was the consequence of a mounting, ever-deepening economic crisis. However, it is difficult to support such a thesis because, with the possible exception of Hungary, the economic problems which the Communists are now attacking with such vigor have existed for a long time. A more plausible hypothesis is that the political crisis caused by Stalin's death made intolerable the continuation of the vast economic disproportions which had hitherto been mastered.

² See above p. 46.

³ Jozsef Reval, *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest), October-November, 1953. The crowning indictment of Hungarian agriculture was Reval's declaration that its livestock situation was "worse than it is in the USSR."

⁴ Stefan Jedrychowski, *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw), No. 10, 1953.

⁵ Report of Premier Bierut to the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers Party, *Trybuna Ludu*, November 6, 1953.

region as a whole production may be tentatively estimated at about 24) five to ten per cent less than before the war.² Since the population of the region has declined by about five per cent, the production per capita is probably at pre-war levels. However, because the proportion of total agricultural lands sown with industrial crops has increased, the produce left for food consumption has probably declined.

Some harvests were, of course, a great deal better than others; and it is easy to be misled by generalizing on the basis of one particularly good or bad year. Poland had a poor harvest in 1951; and Romania and Hungary suffered badly in 1952. The overall picture of Communist agricultural achievement compared to pre-war patterns is summarized in Table 19.

TABLE 19 *
PRODUCTION OF BASIC CROPS IN
EASTERN EUROPE*
(in millions of metric tons)

Crop	1934-1938	1950	1951
Wheat	14.0	12.8	14.6
Rye	11.8	11.1	11.4
Barley	5.7	4.4	4.9
Oats	6.9	5.1	5.4
Maize	12.2	9.0	12.3
Sugar	2.6	3.2	3.1
Potatoes	67.0	62.9	53.6
TOTAL (In equivalent units of wheat)	62.0	52.6	57.3

* *The State of Food and Agriculture: Review and Outlook*, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (Rome, 1953), p. 51.

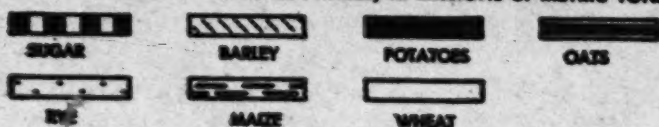
* *The State of Food and Agriculture: Review and Outlook* (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations), p. 51 (Rome, October, 1953). The exclusion of Poland may have been justified at the time the FAO report was written, since Polish economic development has been less distorted than in some of its Satellite neighbors. But in 1953 it became apparent that even in Poland agriculture was probably still close to pre-war levels.

CHART XIII

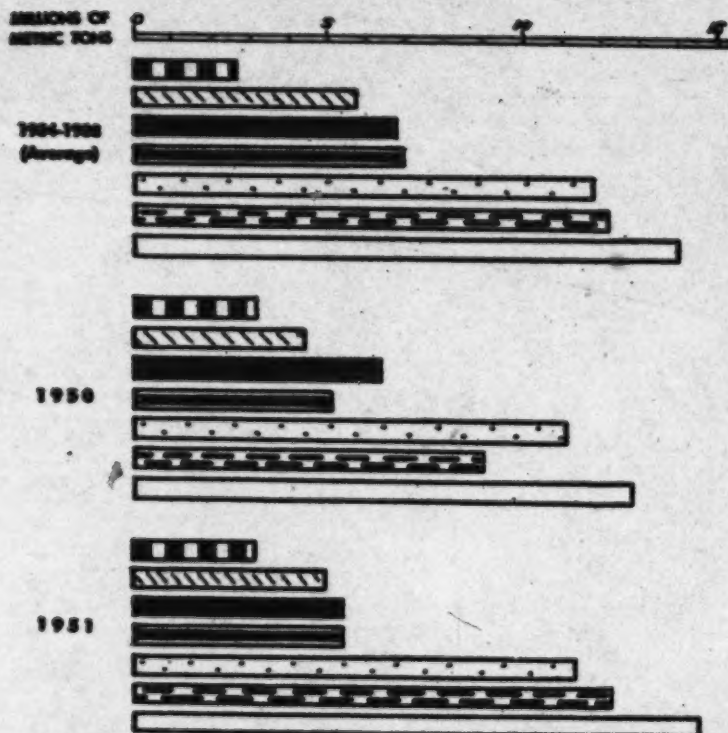
CROP PRODUCTION in the SATELLITES*

(NOT INCLUDING THE BALTIC COUNTRIES) in MILLIONS of METRIC TONS

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(POTATOES REDUCED BY A FACTOR OF 10)



TOTAL WHEAT EQUIVALENT UNITS



* Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Report on East European Agriculture, (Rome), November, 1952.

** The Wheat Equivalent Unit is determined by comparing the caloric value of a given quantity of wheat with the caloric value of the same quantity of another commodity. By the use of this unit it is possible to speak of the sum total of various grains in numerical terms.

According to the FAO analysis, per capita consumption of food (measured in wheat equivalent units) declined from 371 kilograms per head in 1934-38 to 339 in 1950 and 335 in 1951.⁹

The momentous failure of East European agriculture cannot be attributed entirely to mistakes in Communist planning, unforeseen circumstances, bad weather, or an exaggerated idea of the efficacy of modern machinery or collectivization. The evidence makes it quite plain that, from the very start, the Communists were embarking upon an economic program which, by its very nature, precluded the possibility of a genuine increase in agricultural production. Considering the degree to which East European Communists modeled their program on Soviet experience, it is unlikely that they were under any illusions on this score. While it is true that in all modern countries, industrial development and investment have exceeded agricultural development,¹⁰ the Communists were undoubt-

TABLE 20 *

PERCENTAGE OF PLANNED INVESTMENT IN
AGRICULTURE IN EAST EUROPEAN ECONOMIC PLANS

COUNTRY	PERIOD	PERCENTAGE TO BE INVESTED IN AGRICULTURE
Bulgaria	1947-48	6
	1949-53	13
Czechoslovakia	1947-48	7
	1949-53	8
Hungary	1947-49	9
	1950-54	17
Poland	1947-49	13
Romania	1949	9
Yugoslavia	1947-51	8

* *Economic Survey of Europe in 1948*, United Nations, (Geneva, 1949), p. 203.

⁹ The Wheat Equivalent Unit is determined by comparing the caloric value of a given quantity of wheat with the caloric value of the same quantity of another commodity. The procedure makes possible the addition of various crops into one numerical total.

¹⁰ In the non-Soviet world industrial growth invariably outpaces agricultural growth on a percentage basis. Industrial production in 1951 in non-Communist Europe was 45 per cent higher than in 1938 while agricultural production was only 10 per cent higher (*Economic Survey of Europe Since the War*, [Geneva], 1963, pp. 167, 239).

241 edly conscious of the fact that the extraordinary rapidity of Soviet industrial growth in the thirties was achieved partly at the cost of a greater disparity between industrial and agricultural development than was characteristic of the major Western nations.

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185 The extent to which the Communists were prepared to permit a lag in agricultural progress was indicated, first of all, by the small portion of national resources the Plans allocated to agriculture. As shown in Table 20, the planned investment in agriculture averaged around 10 per cent of the total investment schedule. In evaluating the figures in Table 20 it should be remembered that, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, the economies of Eastern Europe were primarily agricultural. Furthermore, in the period of the Plans, an increasingly large share of the land came under the control of the State, whose investment policy is here under scrutiny.

Another indication of the conscious purpose behind Communist agricultural neglect is to be found in the Plan targets set for farm commodities. As Table 21 indicates, the Plans provide for approximately four times as great an increase in the production of producer goods as of agricultural goods. And while a 50 per cent increase in agriculture is not negligible, it represents a goal the Communists, on the basis of Soviet experience, knew they could not possibly fulfill.¹¹

433 TABLE 21
PLANNED FIVE YEAR PLAN PRODUCTION INCREASES
(Poland - Six Years)

COUNTRY	PRODUCER GOODS	CONSUMER GOODS	AGRICULTURE
(Year preceding Plan = 100)			
Bulgaria (1948-53)	326	273	137
Czechoslovakia (1948-53)	230	170	153
Hungary (1950-54)	380	245	154
Poland (1950-56)	254	211	150

¹¹ The underfulfillment of agricultural and light industry targets in the USSR had become almost a tradition, and the East European Communists certainly were conscious of this heritage. They must have known, too, that the failure to fulfill the targets set for non-heavy industrial production did not stop the Soviet planners from setting targets far beyond possible attainment in the next plan (see Harry Schwartz, pp. 305-329). This adamant refusal to bring non-heavy industrial targets into the realm of reality was part of the dogma, firmly held up to Stalin's death, that the rapid expansion of heavy industry did not in any way deter the development of light industry, a dogma which was patently false, but one which for reasons of public safety, had to be upheld.

In pre-war Soviet Plans the targets for consumer goods and agricultural products were invariably underfulfilled, despite the fact that the targets were always set much below those for industry. Indeed, so slight was Communist concern for consumer goods and agriculture that the same targets were frequently repeated in successive Plans.¹² Since we have seen that the Eastern European Communists were deeply influenced by the Soviet experience, it can be assumed that they had few real illusions concerning their capacity to fulfill even those relatively modest targets set for consumer goods and agriculture. "While industrial production in 1953 compared with 1948," said the Czechoslovak Premier Viliam Siroky, "will increase two-fold, agricultural production during the same period will increase only one-third, and will still be below pre-war levels."¹³ But the frankest admission of this planned economic disproportion was made by the then Premier, Antonin Zapotocky, in 1949.

We must rid ourselves of any fond illusions that a rise in the standard of living may be regarded as a necessary corollary, or even ought to precede the successful implementation of the Plan. The exact opposite is the truth: In order to make it possible that our material and cultural level be raised, it will first be necessary to fulfill the Plan...¹⁴

Zapotocky's concise formula was carried out to the letter, as the chronic inadequacy of the urban food supply showed. A similarly candid discussion of the alternatives was given by Hilary Minc, Chairman of the Polish State Planning Commission. His effort to speak frankly on these questions was part of a debate among Polish Communist leaders during the winter of 1951-52. Collectivization had been halted some time in mid-1951; and the question of regaining Communist initiative on the land was evidently being discussed. Minc told a meeting of the activists of the Party Central Committee on October 9th, 1951 that the low level of agricultural production was due to the growing discrepancy between agricultural and industrial production, and therefore he concluded that the acceleration of collectivization (and the further widening of the gulf which it implied) would only intensify the difficulties.¹⁵ Minc was answered on January 9th, 1952, by Eugeniusz Szyr, his deputy

¹² See, for example, Dobb, p. 292.

¹³ *Rude Pravo* (Prague), September 16, 1953.

¹⁴ Quoted in *News from Behind the Iron Curtain* (Free Europe Press, New York), December, 1953, p. 6.

¹⁵ Report to the meeting of activists, Central Committee of the Polish Workers Party, October 9, 1951.

433 in the Planning Commission, who said that the discrepancy between
185 agriculture and industry was "legitimate and in accord with the general conditions of the developing productive forces."¹⁶ In a *Nowe Drogi* article published in February 1952, the then President, Bierut, put the final stamp of disapproval on Minc's analysis of the agricultural failure by stating that "the low production in agriculture cannot be explained by conditions and objective reasons." In other words, it was not, he said, the Government's policy which was responsible for the agricultural lag, but the ineptness with which the policy was being implemented by officials.¹⁷

Bierut answered Minc by denying that an agricultural lag was a necessary corollary of rapid industrial expansion. It is doubtful that he actually believed this to be true, but in order to justify the increased pace of industrialization it was necessary to maintain this dogma. By reiterating the dogma, Bierut ended this brief, but very significant argument; soon full-scale collectivization was resumed in Poland.

Later in 1952, Bierut again complained of lagging agriculture, citing figures to show the widening disproportion (see Table 22). The "rate of increase of agricultural production remains far below the needs of the economy," he said, but he steadfastly refused to acknowledge that the breakneck industrial pace might be responsible.¹⁸ As events turned out, the figures he cited to show agricultural insufficiency decidedly overestimated future agricultural produc-

TABLE 22 *
PRODUCTION IN POLAND - BY SECTOR
(1949 = 100)

	1949	1950	1951	1952 (Planned)	1953
Socialist Industry	100	131	152	192	258
Agriculture as a Whole....	100	111	106	115	150

* B. Bierut, Report at the "Plenum of the Central Committee of the PZPR," June 14-15, 1952.

¹⁶ *Nowe Drogi*, December, 1951, p. 35.

¹⁷ *Nowe Drogi*, February, 1952, pp. 7-8.

¹⁸ *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), November 6, 1953.

tion.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, Bierut was conscious of the fantastic optimism ⁴³³ in the planned 50 per cent increase in agricultural production by ¹⁸⁵ 1953; but he could not admit it until the 1953 New Course released him from some of the extended industrial targets which had made the agricultural lag necessary. In his speech to the Central Committee Plenum in October 1953, Bierut vindicated Minc's original analysis, and acknowledged that the simultaneous expansion of both agriculture and industry at the planned pace was impossible.

Since the New Course constituted a partial repudiation of the program of ever-increasing economic disproportion, Communist leaders felt free to admit the gravity of the situation created by their previous policies. Gheorghiu-Dej, the Romanian Premier, for example, declared:

The rate of industrialization has been forced, especially as regards heavy industry, which led to the establishment of too large a volume of capital investment in comparison with the national revenue, exceeding even the provisions of the Five Year Plan.²⁰

In other words, the bureaucratic machine tended to distort the investment schedule even more than called for in the Plan. "As the result of the allocation of too large capital investments for heavy industry," Gheorghiu-Dej continued, "agriculture—surely one of the principal branches of the national economy—and consumer goods have not been supplied with sufficient funds . . ." In Bulgaria, the disproportions were apparently as pronounced as those in Romania but, for a variety of reasons, Bulgarian Premier Vulko Chervenkov did not feel it necessary to criticize them so sharply. But he too, in his September 8, 1953 New Course address, complained of the serious lag in consumer goods and agriculture resulting from the unbalanced investment program.²¹ The most dramatic revelation of agricultural neglect in the Satellite area came from Hungary in Premier Imre Nagy's speech of July 4, 1953, in which he condemned in the most severe terms the hitherto-accepted policy of heavy industrial emphasis.²² Unlike the other Satellite leaders, who tended

¹⁹ In actual fact the planned targets for 1952 and 1953 were not even partially fulfilled. Instead of 115 per cent in 1952, only 104.9 per cent was reached; and instead of 150 per cent in 1953, only 109.0 per cent was reached (*Gospodarska Planova* [Warsaw], No. 12, 1953, p. 10).

²⁰ *Scanteia* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953.

²¹ *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), September 9, 1953. At the 6th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party, both Chervenkov and the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, Georgi Chankov, acknowledged that agriculture had seriously lagged behind industry (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, March 2, 1954).

²² *Szabad Nép* (Budapest), July 5, 1953.

433 to treat the growing economic disproportions as an *aberration* of
 185 the Plans, or at least of the intention of the Plans, or an unfortunate
 and inexplicable oversight, Nagy clearly assigned responsibility for
 the failure to the leadership itself. Bierut and Gheorghiu-Dej phrased
 their announcements of the New Course in such a way as to hint
 that the agricultural failure had been the result of official policy,
 but they hedged considerably. The extremely critical economic
 situation in Hungary of 1953 forced Nagy to treat the past policy
 with a frankness which was not as apparent elsewhere. But despite
 the reticence elsewhere, it was clear that the growing disproportions
 were the result of deliberate Communist application, with
 slight variations, of the formula stated by Zapotocky in 1949.

665 The most striking proof of the secondary role which agricultural
 development played in Eastern Europe is the general weakness of the
 Communist political apparatus in the countryside. In this respect East
 European Communists followed closely in the Soviet footsteps, where
 approximately 85 per cent of the kolkhozes were without a Party organization
 in 1949.²³ In Poland, Jacob Berman admitted, 43 per cent of the villages
 were without a Party organization altogether,²⁴ and elsewhere in the block
 the situation was no better.²⁵

The absence of strong and viable Party units in the countryside
 reflects the unwillingness of the Communist leadership to assign its
 best technical and administrative personnel outside heavy industry, as
 well as the natural gravitation of rising bureaucrats—many of them,
 after all, drawn from the countryside itself—to the comforts of city
 life. Throughout the Soviet sphere the composition of the Communist
 Parties has become increasingly identified with the new managerial
 bureaucracy and, consequently, the Party units tend to exist in those
 places where the concentration of technicians is greatest.

This partly explains why implementation of the New Course in
 1953-54 has made it imperative that the Party organizations in the
 countryside be strengthened. The East European regimes have

²³ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 454. Fainsod also notes that only 17.7 per cent of the Party members in the predominantly agricultural Ukraine were engaged in agricultural pursuits.

²⁴ *Trybuna Ludu*, November 6, 1953.

²⁵ See the speeches of the Czechoslovak Minister of Agriculture, Jindrich Uher (*Rude Pravo*, December 19, 1953), and the Hungarian Minister of Agriculture, Andras Hegedus (*Szabad Nep*, December 31, 1953).

THE EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES HAVE

brought great pressure to bear upon the urban technicians to go 665
to the villages to improve the technical facilities available for the 369
farms; and simultaneously, strenuous efforts have been made to 463
strengthen the Party organization in the villages. "The situation cannot be tolerated," complained the Hungarian Party organ, *Szabad Nep* in December 1953, "in which skilled and well-educated agricultural experts work in agriculture only in small numbers, and the greater part is engaged in administrative work."²⁶

The administrative weakness of the State in the countryside was also evident from the inferior quality of the personnel employed in rural posts. "Not one of the managers of the Machine and Tractor Stations," the Czechoslovak Minister of Agriculture, Jindrich Uher, revealed, "has a higher-school education and only 8.5 per cent have had a secondary education." Moreover, only 10 per cent of the senior agronomists at the MTS had a higher education, and only three per cent of the State Farm workers had completed work at technical schools.²⁷ Such were conditions in the most modernized of the Satellite nations; undoubtedly, they were much worse elsewhere.

In Poland, for example, an official analysis, based on "incomplete data," revealed that in its 402 Machine and Tractor Stations there were 76 directors, 72 political leaders, 101 senior agronomists, and 101 senior mechanics who had no qualifications for their jobs whatsoever!²⁸ No doubt it was this wretched situation which explains the recent feverish efforts of the Polish Government to train vast numbers of agricultural experts for immediate service as part of its New Course for Agriculture.

But even if the Communists succeed in increasing the output of farm technicians, two serious problems inherent in the system remain. First of all, there is the tendency of these technicians to attach themselves to the central ministerial apparatus from which so much wealth and prestige is derived in the totalitarian state. Secondly, the technicians who have been dispatched to the countryside are burdened with a host of responsibilities unrelated to the task for which they were trained—that is, the endless paper work of Communist bureaucracy. Resolutions, orders, decrees, receipts, dossiers follow each other in an endless succession, requiring immense expenditure of time and effort, and multiplying as the farm

²⁶ *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), December 4, 1953.

²⁷ *Rude Pravo* (Prague), December 19, 1953.

²⁸ *Nowa Droga* (Warsaw), January, 1954, p. 73.

666 apparatus grows. When the introduction of the New Course in 1953
369 made agricultural improvement imperative, the seriousness of this
463 bureaucratic delay and confusion became the subject of frequent
attack by Communist orators, confirming the judgment of a prominent American student of Communist agricultural life who wrote:

When you read . . . of the remarkable increase in the number of agronomists and other agricultural specialists and technicians in the Soviet Union, remember that many of them are not engaged, or do not spend much of their time, in research or extension or other technical work, but are trying to cope with the vast amount of bureaucratic paper work required by the Soviet system.²⁹

The recurrent drives to "deflate the ranks of the farm bureaucracy" have not generally, according to this same expert, proved successful.

407 An additional measure of the long-standing Communist reluctance
241 to divert national resources to agricultural development is to be found in the relatively lethargic pace of farm mechanization. While it is true (see Table 23) that an increase in the mechanization of the "Socialist sector" did accompany collectivization, the increase was by no means as great as popularly pictured, and was not even as great, proportionally, as the increase which accompanied Soviet collectivization in the early thirties. Since one of the stock justifications of large-scale collectivized farming was, and remains, its alleged capacity to exploit modern farm machinery, the failure of the Communists to supply the farms with adequate machinery indicated the degree to which this Communist argument was a rationalization for a policy of exploitation.

Since the broad Russian plains are more adaptable to use of farm machinery, especially large tractors and combines, comparisons with Eastern Europe and its more broken terrain are not altogether apt. However, it should be noted that the Soviet Union provides a higher proportion of tractors to its farms than do the East European Communist regimes. As indicated in Table 23, there were approximately 107,500 tractors in service in Eastern Europe in 1952-53, compared with approximately 45,000 four years earlier. During the four years of collectivization, then, the tractor park in Eastern Europe was increased by only 62,500. In the USSR, on the other hand, over 100,000 tractors were produced in the year 1956 alone,³⁰ far fewer than was needed, but far greater proportionately than in Eastern Europe.

²⁹ Lazer Voina, "Russia's Agricultural Potential," *Foreign Agriculture*, October, 1953, p. 179.

³⁰ Harry Schwartz, p. 243.

TABLE 23
GROWTH OF TRACTOR PARK
IN EASTERN EUROPE

Countries	Number of MTS		(TRACTORS IN 1,000's BY SECTOR)				TOTAL	
	1948/49	1952/53	MTS		STATE FARMS		1948/49	1952/53
			1948/49	1952/53	1948/49	1952/53		
Czechoslovakia.....	800	256	5.0	—	5.0	—	10.0	25.0
Poland.....	30	376	0.2	15.0	14.3	20.0	14.5	35.0
Hungary.....	220	400*	8.0	18.5	—	1.5*	—	20.0*
Romania.....	135	218	5.0*	9.6	8.5	4.4	8.5	15.0
Bulgaria.....	71	140	3.6	12.3	0.2	0.5	3.8	12.5

Sources:

C: 1949: J. Dolansky, *op. cit.*, 1953: J. Dolansky in *For a Lasting Peace*, July 3, 1953.

P: H. Minc: *Le Plan Sexennuel (The Six Year Plan)*, *Notes et Etud. Doc.*, No. 1377, Paris, 1950; tractors: MTS-1953, E. Paszmołowski, in *For a Lasting Peace*, June 12, 1953. Stat. 1948: *Rocznik Stat. (Statist. Year)*, p. 60. 1952 estimated.

H: 1949 in *Hungary Today*. 1952 estimated on the basis of planned figures.

R: 1948: *Problems Economics (Econ. Problems)*, No. 1, 1948. Gh.-Dej. in *For a Lasting Peace*, May 29, 1953.

B: Vukko Chervenkov in *For a Lasting Peace*, Sept. 11, 1953.

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407 As in the USSR, mere numerical increase in farm machinery creates an exaggerated view of the increased efficiency achieved. Though the tractor emphasis of the Soviet planners of the early thirties was avoided in Eastern Europe, the capacity of farm machinery to solve agricultural problems continued to be overrated. The production record of those farms—many of them the vast State Farms in Czechoslovakia and Poland in which the available machinery was largely concentrated—barely exceeds that of the non-mechanized farms. The official press has frequently complained about the inefficiency of Machine and Tractor Stations and the personnel assigned to them, but these complaints reached a particularly high pitch when the New Course directed official attention to agriculture. "We could have . . . better results in the field of farm machinery," the Polish planner, Jacob Berman, complained at the Ninth Party Plenum in October 1953. "Is it normal," he asked, "that of 6,000 engineers in the Ministry of Machine Industry, only 72 work in factories for agricultural machinery?"²¹ Other Communists have complained of the number of idle tractors, the rapid turnover of personnel in the MTS, and the long delays caused by lack of adequate repair facilities.

241 These oft-repeated complaints and the slow pace of agricultural development itself reinforce the impression that Communist claims of extensive mechanization of farms are exaggerated. In Poland, for instance, less than 10 per cent of farming is mechanized.²² In Czechoslovakia, the most advanced country in the region, agricultural work was mechanized, according to Premier Siroky, up to 28 per cent in 1951 and 30 per cent in 1952. These figures hardly square with those given by Siroky for individual components of mechanized operation: plowing, 20 per cent; sowing, 13 per cent; and tending of crops, 0.08 per cent. Siroky himself expressed great dissatisfaction with the progress of farm mechanization:

Especially here in Czechoslovakia we had all the prerequisites for ensuring that Socialist industry would effectively contribute to the development of agricultural production, both in the State farms and cooperatives, and in the private sector. However, the aid on the

²¹ *Trybuna Ludu*, (Warsaw) November 6, 1953.

²² At the end of the Six Year Plan (1956) 18.8 per cent of Polish agriculture is to be mechanized (*Nowe Drogi*, July-August, 1950, p. 212). This is to include 80,000 tractors. Since by the end of 1953 approximately 40,000 tractors were in operation, it can be assumed that approximately half of the projected 18.8 per cent mechanization had been achieved, although it is probably much less.

part of the State and Socialist industry was, and remains, inadequate.²³ 24

Judging by this statement, various claims of rapid mechanization advanced by other East European countries must be taken with great scepticism. For example, the Bulgarian regime claimed "overall mechanization" in agriculture of 34.7 per cent in 1952. Actually, the available figures on surface plowed with tractors in 1947-49 reveal that it was 5.1 per cent in 1947, 6.4 per cent in 1948, and 8.3 per cent in 1949.²⁴ A leap in three years' time to 34.7 per cent "overall mechanization," considering the pace between 1947 and

TABLE 24

COMPARISON OF GROWTH OF COLLECTIVIZED SECTOR
WITH DEVELOPMENT OF TRACTOR PARK IN MTS *
(In percent)

COUNTRY	PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN LAND COLLECTIVIZED	PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN TRACTORS IN MTS (15 Hp. units)
Hungary (Summer 1951 - Summer 1953) _____	218	40.7
Bulgaria (April 1950 - December 1953) _____	319	67
Romania (April 1951 - Summer 1953) _____	144	32
Poland (December 1950 - December 1952) _____	91.5	126

*H: Zoltan Vas, Szikra, 1951, p. 15; Gazdasagpolitikai Tájékoztató, January, 1952; Szabad Nep, March 13, 1954.

B: News from Behind the Iron Curtain (Free Europe Press; New York), March, 1954, p. 17; Agitator's Handbook (Sofia), No. 36.

R: News from Behind the Iron Curtain (Free Europe Press; New York), March, 1954, p. 10; Viata Sindicala (Bucharest), August 19, 1951; Scanteia (Bucharest), July 4, 1953.

P: News from Behind the Iron Curtain (Free Europe Press; New York), February, 1953, p. 17; Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), January 18, 1951, January 29, 1953.

²³ For a Lasting Peace, (Bucharest), September 18, 1953.

²⁴ Bulgaria Nouvelle (Sofia), No. 22 (89), December 24, 1949.

24/ 1949, is hardly feasible. Analysis of similar claims advanced in other captive countries reveals similar discrepancies and exaggerations.

There are two areas of agricultural production which require special comment. In one the Communists have achieved a very modest success; in the other their failure has been conspicuous. In both instances the results shed light on the general character of Communist agrarian policy, for the success was in industrial crops, the failure in livestock.

13) Livestock production—both dairy products and meat—is rightly regarded as one of the basic indices of agricultural prosperity and health. This is so because the cost, in terms of grain produce siphoned off for fodder, is usually high, and only an economy which has a sufficiently high productivity level can afford it. In other words, the caloric value of a given quantity of meat is far lower than that of the grain used in producing it. Only those countries producing a sufficient grain surplus can therefore consider expanding the livestock population. In pre-war Eastern Europe, the general practice was to export surplus grain. On the other hand, a more richly endowed land such as Denmark converted its surplus grain into dairy products before exporting it, and thereby further enriched itself. In Communist Eastern Europe, where grain produc-

TABLE 25
NUMBER OF CATTLE IN EASTERN EUROPE*

COUNTRY	1938	1953	PERCENT OF PRE-WAR
(millions of head)			
Czechoslovakia	4.4	4.3	98
Poland	9.9	7.4	75
Hungary	2.8	1.8	78
Romania	3.5	3.5	100
Bulgaria	1.5	—**	—**
Yugoslavia	4.3	4.8	112

* All countries except Romania: *Economic Survey of Europe Since the War*, (Geneva, 1953). Romania: Ch. Gh-Dej, in *For a Lasting Peace*, August 28, 1953.

** No figures for Bulgaria are available. However, Chervenkov, speaking December 16, 1953, admitted that livestock were still below pre-war levels.

tion had hardly reached pre-war levels by 1951, and the demands ²³¹ of the urban population were rapidly increasing, the possibilities of increased livestock production were small. Indeed, the fodder supply was below the level necessary for maintaining existing livestock population. Therefore (see Table 25), the number of cattle in Eastern Europe had not, by 1952, quite achieved the pre-war levels.

But livestock failure is not recorded merely in terms of quantity, but in quality as well. Czechoslovak Premier Siroky furnished an interesting comment on this point:

In the sphere of animal husbandry we must proceed from the fact that of late the head of cattle has increased without a corresponding extension of the fodder base. Consequently, the head of cattle has grown to the detriment of the quality of the stock and its productivity. Without a serious extension of the fodder base it will be impossible to ensure improvement of the productivity of the stock which, from the point of view of supplying the people with high-grade meat and other high-grade products of animal husbandry, is a most urgent matter.²⁴

One of the chief causes of livestock deterioration is the reliance of ²³¹ East European regimes upon the increasingly impoverished non-⁴⁷⁷ collectivized sector for most livestock produce. As Table 28 makes clear, in each country the livestock in the socialist sector is proportionately less than the amount of land "socialized." Moreover, the major portion of the stock in the collectivized sector is not collective property, but belongs to the peasant households. In Poland, for example, 71 per cent of the cattle, 75.5 per cent of the sheep, and 75.8 per cent of the hogs in the collectivized land belongs to private household plots.²⁵

Thus while the "Socialist sector" concentrates upon marketing ²⁴¹ grain and industrial crops, the private sector and the collectivized households emphasize livestock products. However, as the private sector has been deprived of credits and resources with which to purchase fodder and other necessities, the quality of the livestock has inevitably deteriorated. In spite of the introduction of new "zootechnical methods" on certain model farms, most livestock con-

²³ *For a Lasting Peace*, September 18, 1953. Remarks of a very similar character cropped up in the August 22nd address of the Romanian Premier, Gheorghiu-Dej, and in the September 8th address of the Bulgarian Premier Chervenkov.

²⁴ *Ekonomista* (Warsaw), III, 1953, p. 48.

23/ times to be bred and raised by the traditionally backward East European methods.

TABLE 26
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LIVESTOCK
IN SOCIALIST SECTOR IN 1952*

COUNTRY	PERCENT OF LAND IN SOCIALIST SECTOR	CATTLE	SHEEP	HOGE	HORSES
Czechoslovakia	48.0	33.0	39.7	38.0	—
Poland	17.0	7.8	—	9.2	7.1
Bulgaria	53.0	25.2	29.9	17.6	43.5/

* Sources: Czechoslovakia, *Nepomucky, Rude Praco*, February 5, 1953; Poland, *Wies to Laczach*, p. 25 (Warsaw, 1951); Bulgaria, Chervenkov, *For a Lasting Peace*, September 11, 1953.

24) While animal husbandry lagged, industrial crops crept ahead. Even in this realm, despite increased investments, results have not been spectacular. Few reliable production statistics are available. Table 27 shows only the increase in area given over to industrial crops.²⁷

2. The Return on the Investment

423 In its basic features the picture thus far drawn of East Euro-
656 pean agriculture resembles the one drawn earlier of Soviet agri-
475 culture: a strenuous effort to force the peasantry into a farm system over which the State could exercise direct administrative control; a feverish effort to build modernized industry at a pace which precluded much investment in agriculture; a resultant stagnation of and, in some instances, a deterioration of, agricultural production; and a constant tension between State and the peasants arising from their unending struggle over the fruits of the peasants' labors.

In the USSR, however, the victory of the State over the peasantry was concluded with far greater finality than in Satellite Eastern Europe; the system held together over a quarter of a century which included the most severe war-time trials. Collectivization in the USSR possesses stability because it has managed to provide the State with the minimum of foodstuffs necessary for its economic

²⁷ It is significant that among the many steps taken to implement the New Course in several East European countries was the reduction of the area sown with industrial crops.

TABLE 27

AREA UNDER INDUSTRIAL CROPS 1949-1951/52*

(1000 hectares)

	1949						1951/52					
	C	P	H	R	B	Y	C	P	H	R	B	Y
Cotton	-	-	37	60	-	42	-	-	40	150	-	16
Flax	28	109	22	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	10
Hemp	5	13	28	-	-	108	-	19	-	-	-	58
Sugar beets	194	250	113	62	31	89	219	275	115	81	32	100
Tobacco	6	14	22	9	30	35	-	20	-	-	-	37

* Data from unpublished manuscript of Dr. Nicholas Spulber (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

program. The question with respect to Eastern Europe is whether collectivization has provided the same agricultural cushion as it did for the USSR. Specifically, does the collectivized sector in the Satellites provide the State with a higher proportion of the total produce marketed per hectare than the private sector? As was shown, the capacity of the Soviet collectivized sector to produce for the market was its very reason for existence. 423
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The evidence available from Eastern Europe is too scattered and unreliable to justify the type of definite conclusion drawn from the Soviet materials.²² However, on the basis of an examination of each country in Eastern Europe, some tentative conclusions can be reached.

Throughout the following comparison of the "Socialist" and private sectors, the variety of advantages which the "Socialist sector" enjoys should be kept in mind. First, on the whole the "Socialist sector" comprises better and more fertile land. It is composed of larger farms, capable of supporting more people. In particular, State Farms are frequently, though not always, located on the prosperous lands once belonging to nobles, aristocrats, or German landholders. Second, the "Socialist sector" has at its dis-

²² The transformation of statistics from an objective science into an arm of State propaganda occurred in the USSR in 1930-31, but several years were necessary for the completion of the task. As a result, there is a great deal more information available concerning the first and second Five Year Plans in the USSR than concerning the Satellite economic developments after 1947. The Satellite Communists, after all, borrowed their techniques of falsification when they had been thoroughly developed in the USSR.

423 posal most of the available farm machinery, either confiscated or
 656 purchased after the Second World War and also what has since
 been manufactured. In Poland in 1951, for example, the "Socialist
 sector," comprising some 17 per cent of the arable land, had at its
 disposal 98 per cent of the nation's tractor supply.³⁹ In Bulgaria
 in 1948 the "Socialist sector," then comprising only eight per cent of
 the arable land, already had at its disposal 81 per cent of the
 tractors and threshing machines.⁴⁰ Third, the "Socialist sector"
 received a high portion of the meager State credits extended to the
 farm population for constructing new buildings, purchasing ferti-
 lizers, seed, and fodder. And fourth, the "Socialist sector" generally
 received more favorable trade terms from government agencies,
 and benefited from official tax and delivery quota discrimination
 against the private sector. The agricultural structure of each country
 will be analyzed in terms of the above-stated criteria.

BULGARIA

241 As everywhere, pertinent information is sparse and only sug-
 475 gestive. The State Farms, occupying 2.5 per cent of the arable land,
 423 market 1.5 per cent of the nation's grain crop. The "Socialist sector,"
 occupying 52.0 per cent of the arable land, markets 65 per cent of
 the grain; and the private farms, composing 45.5 per cent of the
 arable land, market 33.5 per cent of the grain crop.⁴¹ In the light
 of the aforementioned advantages accruing to the "Socialist sector,"
 and considering the fact that in Bulgaria the "Socialist sector" is
 concentrated in the fertile valleys (See Chart IX), this division
 is not altogether surprising. The proportion of marketed grain
 derived from the "Socialist sector" is greater than its arable land,
 and almost as much greater as that which the USSR achieved when
 approximately half of its arable land was collectivized.⁴² It should
 be noted, however, that, as in the USSR, the modest success of the
 "Socialist sector" as a grain producer was achieved at the cost of
 neglecting animal husbandry, since a high percentage of the nation's
 livestock remained in the private sector. But if the "Socialist
 sector" neglected animal husbandry, it emphasized a few semi-

³⁹ *Wies w Leczach* (Warsaw, 1951), p. 25.

⁴⁰ *Part i Kredit* (Sofia), No. 2, 1948, p. 8.

⁴¹ *Rabotnichesko Delo*, (Sofia) February 26, 1953.

⁴² In the Soviet Union in 1932, 66 per cent of the arable land was in the "Socialist sector"; and it supplied 84 per cent of the marketed grain. (Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917*, New York, 1948, p. 249).

industrial crops. In 1953, 75 per cent of the nation's cotton and 84 per cent of its sugar beets were produced in the "Socialist sector."⁴³

POLAND

Communist authorities in Poland have frequently asserted the superior productivity of the "Socialist sector" of agriculture. But since the claims so frequently contradict each other and contradict general claims concerning the productive capacity of the entire sector, they must be treated cautiously. For example, although the Communists have, at various times, claimed from 15 to 20 per cent greater yield per hectare for collective farms, they do not claim a higher proportionate yield for the sector as a whole.⁴⁴

On the central question of the deliveries made by the two sectors, statistics are equally uncertain. In the year 1950, the Communists seemed confident of the superior capacity of the "Socialist sector" to market its grain. The statistics in Table 28 seem to bear out this confidence.

TABLE 28
PROPORTION OF GRAIN MARKETED IN
POLAND IN 1950*

	WINTER WHEAT	SPRING WHEAT	RYE
Production Cooperatives.....	67.0	49.0	31.4
Private Farms	34.3	34.3	28.7

* *Wies w Licsbach* (Warsaw, 1952), p. 132.

And in 1951 the regime claimed that the "Socialist sector," comprising only 15 per cent of the land, accounted for 23.2 per cent of the marketed grain, while the private sector, comprising 85 per cent of the land, accounted for only 76.8 per cent of the marketed grain. According to these reports, both State Farms and collectives contributed far more than their proportionate share to the market.⁴⁵

However, there is reason to doubt the validity of these statistics. The marketing report in 1953 shows the "Socialist sector" in a

⁴³ *Zemledelsko Zname* (Sofia), December 2, 1953.

⁴⁴ For example, according to *Wies w Licsbach* (1952), the productive cooperatives have an approximately 20 per cent higher yield than the individual holdings. But other regime statistics indicate that the total produce of the productive cooperatives is no greater — per hectare — than the individual holdings.

⁴⁵ *Wies w Licsbach* (1952).

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TABLE 29
PROPORTION OF GRAIN MARKETED IN
POLAND BY SECTOR IN 1953*

SECTOR	PERCENT OF MARKETED GRAIN	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND
State Farms	17.0	11.9
Production Cooperatives	6.5	6.5
Small Peasants	7.5	11.5
Middle Peasants	50.0	59.0
Kulaks	19.0	11.1
	100.0	100.0

* *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), December 31, 1953.

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much less flattering light (see Table 29). However, even in 1953 the "Socialist sector" contributed more than its share to the market, and thus economically justified itself. Holding 18.4 per cent of the arable land, the "Socialist sector" contributed 23.5 per cent of the marketed grain. It should be noted, however, that the superiority was confined solely to State Farms. The collective farms, which comprised six per cent of the countryside, marketed no more than six per cent of the total grain.

The important role the State Farms play is made clear in Table 30, where it is demonstrated that, despite the low productivity per hectare, the State Farms outdid others in marketed production.

TABLE 30
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF
POLISH STATE FARMS
1949 - 1952*

	1949	1950	1951	1952 (Planned)
Percent of Total Production (in current prices)	5.4	6.1	7.5	9.6
Percent of Total Marketing	—	6.8	10.5	15.1

* *Wies 10 Litzbach*, (Warsaw, 1952), p. 116.

FARM PRODUCTION and MARKETING IN POLAND - BY SECTOR*

- 1952 -

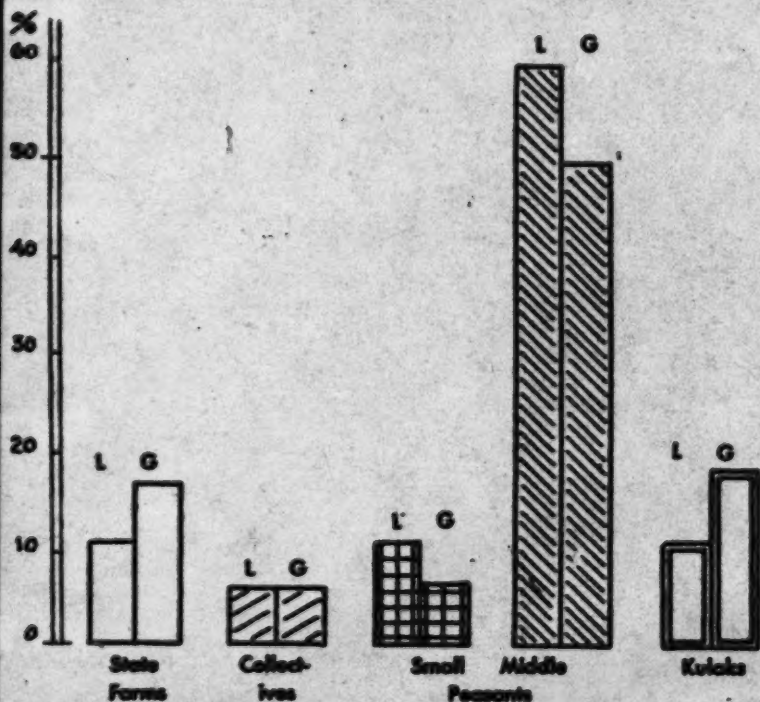
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Percent of arable land (L)



Percent of marketed grain (G)



433 But if the State Farms exceed independent farms in grain
 231 marketing, the so-called kulaks exceed even the State Farms. With
 475 only 11.1 per cent of the arable land, they account for 19 per cent
 of the marketed grain. Precisely for this reason the Polish economist,
 Jerzy Tepicht, in an article published in December 1953, warned
 against the "irresponsible policy of destroying the productive capa-
 city" of the kulaks.⁴⁵ If the kulaks cannot be broken, the regime
 must cooperate with them or risk an agricultural crisis such as
 occurred in Hungary in 1953.

The same Tepicht, in an article on the general problem of
 marketing, tried to establish the thesis that State Farms had come
 to play the same role in marketing that had formerly been held by
 large landowners.⁴⁶ In pre-war times the large landowners, holding
 18.1 per cent of the land, contributed 29.9 per cent of the total
 marketed grain. Today, the State Farms, holding 12 per cent of the
 arable land, deliver 21.2 per cent of the marketed grain. Tepicht
 concludes that the marketing ability of the State Farms equals that
 of the pre-war landed estates, and thereby justifies the existence of
 the State Farms. The only flaw in his argument — aside from the
 peculiarity of such a justification on the part of a Communist! — lies
 in the fact that the majority of the State Farms (73.7 per cent) are
 in the Western territories where private farms also deliver high
 grain surpluses to the market. Holding only 31.1 per cent of the
 arable land, private farmers in the Western territories market 65.4
 per cent of the grain delivered by the private sector in all Poland.⁴⁷
 It seems likely, therefore, that the superior marketing power of the
 State Farms is due as much to their geographical location as to
 their internal structure.

In addition, it should be noted that the State Farms have
 established their grain marketing record at the cost of a very poorly
 developed livestock, a condition which they have in common with
 the collectives. Whereas the small farmers, with 11.5 per cent of
 the arable land, possess 20 per cent of the pigs and cows, and all
 the independent farms, with 76.5 per cent of the arable land, raise
 93.1 per cent of the cattle and 90.1 per cent of the pigs, the State
 Farms, with 12 per cent of the land, raise only 9.2 per cent of the

⁴⁵ *Trybuna Ludu*, (Warsaw) December 31, 1953.

⁴⁶ *Ekonomista*, III, 1953, pp. 31-2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 35. Tepicht's figures differ from those given above (Table 29) but the difference is slight, and either set would support his argument.

pigs and six per cent of the cows. The kolkozoes, with over six per cent of the land, raise less than one per cent of the cattle, pigs, and sheep. ⁴³³ The neglect of livestock is evidently characteristic of large-scale farming in Poland since the kulaks, who also produce a high marketable surplus, have also had negligible success in animal husbandry. ²³¹ ⁴⁷⁵

Despite these modifications, the State Farms have played a sizeable role in establishing the Communist-desired relationship between the town and country. It is also clear that, up to this point, the collectivized sector has played a very limited role.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The data relating to sector-by-sector marketing in Czechoslovakia is, unfortunately, even more scattered than in Poland, and permits less conclusive inferences. For example, it is known that in 1950 the State purchased 46 per cent of the grain production of both sectors, collective and private. It is also known that in 1949 the farms of less than 10 hectares—virtually all the private sector—contributed only 33 per cent of their production to the State.⁶⁰ Therefore, it can be assumed that the "Socialist sector"—mostly State Farms in 1949, but including a large number of collectives in 1950—contributed a higher portion of its produce than did the private farms. Furthermore, in 1951 farms of under 10 hectares accounted for only 39 per cent of grain deliveries, so that presumably the larger farms contributed more than their proportionate share of the market.⁶¹

In 1953, according to official Czechoslovak statistics, the "Socialist sector," comprising over 50 per cent of the land, accounted for 51 per cent of the marketed grain, 46 per cent of the marketed cattle, 57 per cent of the marketed pigs, and 43 per cent of the marketed milk.⁶² These figures suggest that the market benefits gained by the Czechoslovak State are quite modest, and frequent claims that the collectives fulfill quotas more fully than the private

⁶⁰ *Trybuna Ludu*, December 31, 1953; Jan Wyronebski, *Radio Warsaw*, January 22, 1954.

⁶¹ *Rude Praco*, (Prague) February 22, 1951.

⁶² *Nová Mysl* (Prague), November, 1953. The farms under 10 hectares, comprising 51 per cent of the arable land, contributed only 39 per cent of the marketed grain while the collective farms in 1951, holding 19 per cent of the land, contributed 20.7 per cent of the marketed grain.

⁶³ *Zpráva Statistického Úřadu Statistického* (Prague), January 31, 1954.

433 farms are not altogether true.³³ At the same time, the greater con-
231 fidence the regime has in the capacity of the collectives to fulfill
475 quotas is not altogether unjustified.

[13] Although the bulk of livestock in Poland is in the private sector, a sizeable portion of the livestock in Czechoslovakia is in the "Socialist sector." In 1952, 33.8 per cent of the cattle, 37.7 per cent of the hogs, and 38.7 per cent of the sheep were in the "Socialist sector."³⁴

Although the Czechoslovak regime may have gained some market advantages from collectivization, its victory remains quite inconclusive. With the New Course, the regime, in turning to the private sector for agricultural reinforcement, acknowledged that the advantage gained was insufficient for its purposes.³⁵

HUNGARY

423 The transformation of the agricultural structure in Hungary in
433 1945-46 was the most drastic of the post-war land reforms; and there is unquestionably a connection between the semi-revolutionary character of that agrarian reform and the special gravity of the Hungarian farm crisis in mid-1953. Whether this crisis had its roots in peasant hyper-sensitivity to the imposition of an overlordship resembling former conditions, or to the destruction of traditional trade relationships between town and country is not altogether clear; but that a close connection exists between the 1945-46 reform and the 1953 crisis is difficult to doubt.³⁶

The impact of the 1945-46 reforms on the traditional trade

³³ For example, *Rude Pravo* (December 4, 1953), asserted that the collective farms had fulfilled their quotas for grain by 103 per cent while the private farms had fulfilled their quota by only 77 per cent. A similar differential held for the fulfillment of meat, pork, and milk quotas.

³⁴ Cited in *Zycie Gospodarcze* (Warsaw), April 19, 1953, p. 484.

³⁵ As in Poland, the Czechoslovak New Course placed special emphasis upon protecting the productive capacity of the kulaks while at the same time, of course, limiting his alleged urge to engage in speculation and exploitation. "It would harm our agricultural economy," said Minister of Agriculture Uher, if the land which the kulaks occupied was not "fully utilized by them" (*Rude Pravo*, November 10, 1953).

³⁶ A subjective factor such as the peasants' degree of class consciousness is difficult to incorporate into an analysis of this type. However, without some recourse to this factor, it is difficult to explain the special depth of the 1953 Hungarian crisis, so much more pronounced was it than similar crises in the sphere. The series of articles in the Hungarian press during the fall and summer of 1953 portraying the countryside during the period of kolkhoz dissolutions certainly suggested that the Hungarian peasantry felt a hatred for their oppressors of an intensity hardly rivaled in the Sphere. It should not be forgotten that the strongest of the post-World War II peasant parties in the sphere was the Smallholders' Party of Hungary, which received 57 per cent of the vote in 1947 elections.

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relationship between town and country has received little attention, but evidence suggests that its effect was much the same as that caused by the peasant upheaval of Russia in 1917-18.⁸⁷ Pre-war Hungary's agricultural sectors participated in the market as outlined in Table 31. As in pre-revolutionary Russia, the large landowners accounted for a share of the market in excess of their share of total arable land. This superior capacity to market goods reflected, as in Russia, not greater production, but the ability to sell a greater proportion of what they produced. While the peasants marketed 47 per cent of their crop, the large landowners marketed 67 per cent.⁸⁸

By dividing the land more equitably, the 1945-46 reforms upset the equilibrium of the pre-war system. As a result, a larger portion of the total product was consumed by the peasants, and a smaller portion sent to the cities. To rectify this situation, and to restore the cities to the dominant position they had once enjoyed, first the compulsory deliveries system, and then collectivization, were imposed by the Communists.⁸⁹ The rapid development of industry and growth of urban population made it imperative that a greater proportion of the produce be siphoned off the land than before the war.

But the Hungarian Communists have acknowledged that they were unable even to restore the pre-war level of land exploitation. The collective farm structure could not compensate for the loss of the large landholdings; and with the bad harvest of 1952, the agricultural situation grew desperate.

This failure was the subject of an extremely interesting analysis by the Communist theoretician, Mrs. Aladar Mod, published some two months prior to the official introduction of the New Course

⁸⁷ It is perhaps significant that the two European countries which experienced a successful Bolshevik seizure of power at the time of World War I were Russia and Hungary.

⁸⁸ Mrs. Aladar Mod, *Társadalmi Szemle*, April-May, 1953. Most of the material concerning Hungarian market relations is taken from Mod's extremely interesting study published on the eve of the New Course explosion.

⁸⁹ In some countries (Czechoslovakia and Poland) the system of compulsory deliveries was taken over directly from the German administration after the war. It is interesting that the totalitarian regimes, faced by the same problems, so frequently work out similar solutions. Just as the Communists in Eastern Europe incorporated Nazi techniques into their apparatus, so the Nazis, when occupying Communist Russia, kept the kolkhozes intact and exploited them as the Communists had done. Like the Soviet planners, the Germans found the collectives to be eminently suited to the economic demands of a totalitarian state.

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TABLE 31
PRE-WAR AGRARIAN TRADE PATTERNS IN HUNGARY*

SECTOR	PERCENT OF HOLDINGS	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND	PERCENT OF TOTAL CROP	PERCENT OF OWN CROP MARKETING	PERCENT OF TOTAL MARKETING
Small Holdings (Under 25 cad. acres).....	94.0	48	51.6	47.2	48.6
Medium Holdings (25-200 cad. acres).....	5.5	28	24.2	63.6	27.4
Large Holdings (Over 200 cad. acres).....	0.5	24	24.2	67.0	29.0
TOTAL.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	55.9	100.0

* *Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv*, (Budapest, 1948), p. 103; *Társadalmi Szemle*, April-May, 1953; *Hungarian State Yearbook*, Special Agricultural Issue (Budapest, 1935).

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into Hungary in July 1953. In it she pointed out that the "Socialist sector" produced approximately 10 per cent less for the market than the former landholdings of 200 cadastral acres. "The percentage of grain production for the market," she flatly concluded, after lengthy analysis, "is much lower than it was prior to liberation." As a result, grain exports had been drastically curtailed; yet even after this, the cities were still poorly supplied. Taking 1938 agricultural production as 100, current production has reached the following levels sector-by-sector:

	1938	1951	1952
Working Peasantry	100	130	109
Kulaks	100	46.7	23.4
Large-scale farms	100	73	74.8

The working peasants had increased their total yield because the land under their control had grown by 25 per cent. But theirs was the one sector incapable of substantially contributing to the market. The two sectors capable of supplying the market with a large surplus had declined seriously — the kulak sector in amount of land under its control, and the large landowners (now "Socialist") in general efficiency. The resulting trade relations are described in Table 32.

In each year the percent of the crop delivered by the kulaks excelled that of the "Socialist sector;" but in each year the kulak share of the total crop declined as the result of State encroachment on his land. Inevitably the total amount of grain delivered to the State declined because the "Socialist sector" was unable to make up the loss. Mrs. Mod herself summed up the crisis implicit in the situation these statistics describe:

The number of small producers is now much larger than it used to be. The producer who used to produce for the market, produces doubly less today; and today they consume much more, and market much less than in the past. Our Socialist large-scale farms, partly for the same reasons and partly on account of their still-existing infantile disorders (inadequate management, lax labor discipline) are for the time being unable to make up for the shortage.

Mrs. Mod refrained from mentioning a third factor in the curtailment of marketed production: the stern refusal of the Communist industrial order to provide incentives for greater production and

TABLE 32

POST-WAR AGRARIAN TRADE PATTERNS IN HUNGARY*
1949 - 1952

SECTOR	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND	PERCENT OF TOTAL CROP IN CROP PRODUCED	PERCENT OF CROP DELIVERED TO STATE	PERCENT OF TOTAL GRAIN DELIVERY
1949				
Working peasants' farms	75.5	82.1	38.3	75.3
Kulak farms.....	17.0	18.4	59.9	23.5
Socialist sector.....	7.5	1.5	31.7	1.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	41.7	100.0
1951				
Working peasants' farms	**	72.5	46.9	66.9
Kulak farms.....	**	10.1	66.2	13.2
Socialist sector.....	26.0	17.4	58.2	19.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	50.8	100.0
1952				
Working peasants' farms	**	69.6	41.7	61.4
Kulak farms.....	**	5.5	61.0	7.2
Socialist sector.....	34.5	24.9	59.6	31.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	47.4	100.0

* *Társadalmi Szemle*, April-May, 1953.

** Data unavailable.

greater trade with the cities. The drastic economic reforms initiated during the summer of 1953 were part of a frantic effort to correct this imbalance, an imbalance pronounced in Hungary and terribly aggravated by the disastrous 1952 harvest.

ROMANIA

The Romanian Government has been more secretive about internal market relations than any other Satellite, making conclusions even more difficult to draw. The "Socialist sector," including the "primitive" agricultural associations, comprise 25 per cent of the arable land. According to Premier Gheorghiu-Dej, this sector produces no more than 25 per cent of the total crop,⁸⁰ no more than its proportionate share of the arable land. This suggests that the

⁸⁰ Gheorghiu-Dej, *Scnteia*, August 23, 1953.

"Socialist sector," despite its advantages, has given little benefit to the State in terms of marketed produce. The Romanian Council of Ministers frequently complains, as it did on January 28, 1952, that "in spite of all the important benefits given to the peasantry by the State... the market was not sufficiently supplied with agricultural products necessary to consumers and to industrial production."²¹

YUGOSLAVIA

The history of collectivization in Yugoslavia is so complex, and differs in so many respects from the course followed elsewhere in Eastern Europe, that comparisons are difficult. However, in certain fundamental respects, the initial collectivization drive (1948-1950) had the same goals as those guiding the Cominform bloc. No data on produce marketed are available; but production data indicate that in the years of collectivizing, the Government was successful at least in obtaining higher yields on its State and collective farms than from the private sector, and presumably was able to extract a large portion of that yield from the farms. Undoubtedly, this result was due in part to the ability of the Yugoslav regime to collectivize the fertile Vojvodina region (see Chart VII), where yield per hectare was traditionally high. But the "Socialist sector" also included a good deal of the poor and relatively unproductive land of Macedonia, and therefore Table 33, in which the proportion of grain produced by each sector is compared with the proportion of land held, is significant.

OVERALL MARKET PERSPECTIVE

Despite the sparseness and frequent unreliability of the statistical data employed in this analysis, some conclusions may be drawn.

1. In varying degrees, depending upon the country, collectivization in Eastern Europe has actually expedited extraction of agricultural produce from the countryside at the low price consistent with Communist industrial designs. While the system of compulsory deliveries at State-regulated prices was effective to this end, it left enough initiative and power in the hands of the peasantry to hamper the development of industry.

In Bulgaria collectivization results are the most impressive; in Czechoslovakia the gains are less impressive, but still significant. In Poland the regime has had to rely a great deal upon the surplus

²¹ *Scandals*, January 29, 1952.

TABLE 33

GRAIN PRODUCTION IN YUGOSLAVIA - 1948-1951*
 BY ECONOMIC SECTOR
 (In percent of total production)

YEAR	SECTOR	WHEAT	RYE	BARLEY	OATS	TOTAL**	PERCENT OF ARABLE LAND***
1948/49	State.....	2.3	1.8	7.4	8.5	3.4	3.0
	Cooperative.....	14.2	11.6	15.1	16.4	14.4	10.0
	Private.....	83.5	86.6	77.5	75.1	82.2	87.0
1949/50	State.....	3.2	2.0	14.5	12.4	5.0	4.0
	Cooperative.....	23.2	24.0	25.4	28.7	23.9	16.0
	Private.....	73.6	74.0	60.1	58.9	71.1	80.0
1950/51	State.....	2.8	2.4	17.4	14.5	5.5	4.0
	Cooperative.....	25.3	28.4	28.3	30.0	26.3	19.0
	Private.....	71.9	69.2	54.3	55.5	68.2	77.0

* *Bulletin of Information and Documents*, (Belgrade), Vol. 1, No. 4, 1952, pp. 21-26.

** The total is derived from the combined tonnage of the wheat, rye, barley, and oats. Since the caloric value of a ton of wheat is greater than a ton of barley or oats, combining them all in one sum is deceptive. However, for the purposes of the above comparison the rough approximation of the "total" given, based entirely on tonnage, is sufficient. If potato production had been included in this table, then a caloric measurement such as the FAO used in establishing its "Wheat Equivalent Unit" (See Chart XIII) might have been employed, since the caloric content of a given weight of potatoes is only one-fifth that of an equivalent weight of wheat, whereas barley and oats are three-fifths.

*** The figures given for arable land in this table are estimates. Since grain production is given according to the agricultural year and the progress of collectivization according to the calendar year, it was necessary to interpolate the latter figures to accord with the former.

production of State Farms rather than the collectives, and, as in 475
Hungary, kulaks and middle farmers continue to constitute a major 423
source of marketable produce. In Romania the positive results of 432
collectivization appear to be negligible, and, consistently enough,
its industrial expansion has been quite modest. And in Hungary
collectivization seems to have aggravated an already critical town-
country relationship. But even in Hungary, and to a lesser extent
Romania, the degree of peasant exploitation was sufficient to insure
considerable urban development.

2. At the same time, it must be stressed, the evidence indicates
that collectivization was by no means as successful as it was in the
Soviet Union. This seems to be true both quantitatively (in terms
of percentage of arable land absorbed) and qualitatively (in terms
of reorientation of the market). It was not sufficiently comprehen-
sive or intensive to facilitate the rapid increase in peasant exploita-
tion which, from the regimes' viewpoint, justified the bloodshed
and brutality of Communist agrarian policy.

CHAPTER V

OLD FAILURE AND NEW COURSE (1953)

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656 1. *The System in Crisis*

The year 1953 constituted a major turning point in the development of agricultural policy throughout the Soviet sphere. Repercussions were felt from the most remote *kolkhoz* in Siberia to the most backward mountain farm in Albania. For the first time since 1928, when the initial Communist collectivization drive was launched, the powerful Communist mechanism for intensifying exploitation of the peasantry was halted and a period of concession, retrenchment, and cautious retreat was ushered in.

Unlike previous pauses in the Communist offensive against the peasantry — in 1930, 1935, and 1941-5 — the 1953 "readjustment" was accompanied by a revaluation of the entire relationship between agrarian policy and industrial expansion. The 1930 Stalin "Dizziness With Success" speech signified only a temporary pause in the first Five Year Plan; the 1935 decree enlarging private household plots represented only a slight reorganization of the still fluid *kolkhoz* structure; and the relaxation of 1941-45 was due largely to the special exigencies of World War II. None of the concessions made during these periods (with the possible exception of the war-time years) were as broad in scope as those of 1953; and none were offered as an integral part of a concern for mounting disproportions afflicting the entire economic life.

The elaboration of post-Stalin agricultural policies serves not merely as a climax to the indictment of the Communist land program, but as a sharp cleavage in the history of collectivization through which its inner character might be most acutely analyzed. This study has therefore, drawn heavily upon the flood of frank speeches made by Communist leaders in the second half of 1953. Their candor, like the correspondence which attended the Tito-Stalin

dispute in 1948, illumine areas of conflict and difficulty hitherto only guessed at. 185
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The causes of agricultural retrenchment were various and a full exploration of them is not appropriate here. But from the multiplicity of probable causes, two basic facts may be singled out: First, the political readjustment which took place following Stalin's death brought about a number of organic changes in the Communist movement. The precise nature of the changes generated by the sudden loss of Stalin is little known, and even less understood; but clearly they had very important social and economic implications. Some of the most oppressive and aggressive features of Communism, feasible when Stalin was at the helm, were evidently not feasible when in the hands of a "collective leadership." Stalinist policies had resulted in the growing economic disproportions described above: the hysterical drive for industrialization, the steady decline of the standard of living, and the stagnation of agriculture, conditions which may be considered the secondary causes of the New Course, insofar as the death of Stalin made it imperative that drastic steps be taken to alter them. 656

To the very eve of the New Course in 1953, the traditional Stalinist agricultural offensive was in full swing. Indeed, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and especially in Poland, collectivization drives were reaching their greatest pitch in the spring of 1953. The slogan, "liquidation of the kulaks," was generally accepted, and the entire peasantry subjected to ceaseless harassment. In the Soviet Union the decline of livestock population between 1950 and 1953 reflected the harsh spirit of the last years of Stalin's life. The basic measure of success was heavy industrial production; the keynote was the increasing obedience and discipline demanded at the 19th Party Congress; and the tone was set by the Slansky trial in Prague at the end of 1952, and the arrest of the Kremlin doctors in Moscow at the beginning of 1953.

The New Course therefore represented a sudden break in the rising curve revealed by these events. Between Stalin's death in March and Imre Nagy's astounding New Course address in Hungary in July, the governments of almost every Communist country made various minor concessions which presaged the more drastic

¹ For a detailed exposition of the events of 1953 leading up to promulgation of the New Course, together with an analysis of current trends, see "New Policies in the Soviet Sphere" (Free Europe Press: New York, November 1953).

185 reforms to come. Amnesties were declared in Soviet Russia and
178 Romania, the imprisoned American correspondent, William Oatis,
656 was released in Czechoslovakia, the aggressive anti-Tito line of the
preceding years was modified everywhere, and in East Germany
reforms were announced which, because they communicated regime
indecision to the people, touched off the famous June 17th revolt.
This revolt, and an earlier, perhaps more significant one in
Czechoslovakia, seem only to have accelerated the pace of change
in the sphere. By October 1953 New Course policies had been an-
nounced by all of the Communist countries (with the exception,
of course, of China). "We must note, and we must state frankly
before the whole country," said the new Hungarian Premier Imre
Nagy, "that the objectives of the augmented Five Year Plan are
beyond our strength". "We must adopt . . . a considerably reduced
tempo of industrialization which will enable us to step up output
of consumer goods and ensure a still greater development of agri-
culture," the Bulgarian Premier Vulko Chervenkov said on Septem-
ber 8th.¹ "It has become clear," said Czechoslovak Premier Viliam
Siroky on September 15th, "that certain targets of the extended
Five-Year Plan for heavy industry were too high."²

The agricultural policy pattern that emerged in the middle
of 1953 varied from one country of the Soviet sphere to the next.
Yet everywhere, with the possible exception of Hungary, where
the crisis assumed a special severity, the new policies were essen-
tially the same. Polish Premier Bierut explained in his New Course
address in October that it was:

. . . no mere coincidence that the . . . problem of what the
emphasis of our future economic development should be . . . has
appeared today with equal force and timeliness in all countries of
the Socialist camp.

These similarities in pace and timing, he explained, arise,
not only from the identical character of social changes taking place
in these countries but also from the basic similarity — in spite of
certain differences — in the class structure of the countries which
are engaged in Socialist construction.³

The "social changes" of which Bierut spoke were the growing
economic disproportions, the vast expansion of an industrial plant
at the expense of living standards and agricultural prosperity. The

¹ *Szabad Nép* (Budapest), July 5, 1953.

² *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), September 9, 1953.

³ *Rude Pravo* (Prague), September 16, 1953.

⁴ Quoted by S. Jedrychowski, *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw), No. 10, 1953.

"problem" the New Course had to grapple with, as Bierut stated ¹⁷⁸ it, was to determine "what the emphasis of our future economic ¹⁸⁵ development should be." Clearly the "problem" could only be ⁶⁵⁶ solved by modifying past emphases, and this meant, first of all, a new policy toward agriculture.

In Bulgaria, where over half the land is in the "Socialist sector," the New Course has had the least impact; in East Germany, on the other hand, where capitalist elements are still plentiful, the post-Stalin reorientation had its most pronounced effect. In Poland, where collectivization had proceeded very slowly and cautiously up to 1953, the New Course signified only an abrupt halt in the land offensive, but little retreat. In Romania, where collectivization had also been modest in scope, the reforms were broader, producing a plethora of decrees and resolutions. In Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where the pace of collectivization had been rapid and stormy, the New Course brought about a reversal of the aggressive policies, a sharp reversal in Hungary, a slighter one in Czechoslovakia.

The national variations were great; but the basic features of the New Course were areawide:

1. An attempt is being made to increase the proportion of national resources allotted to agriculture. "We must teach our people," said Polish theoretician Jacob Berman, "after this long period of concentration on heavy industry, to achieve a balance between heavy and light industry."⁶ The State budgets for the year 1954 announced in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary reflected this shift in emphasis.⁷

2. The effort to increase the agricultural produce available to the cities by further peasant exploitation has been halted. Greater emphasis is to be placed upon the use of material incentives, rather than on administrative pressure, in increasing total agricultural yield. "We must," said Berman, "put on the market goods which the peasant is interested in purchasing," since, as he explained, the increased supply of goods for the cities was to be partially the result of an "increased supply of consumer goods to the countryside."⁸

⁶ *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), November 6, 1953.

⁷ In Hungary, for example, the 1954 State budget plans for doubling the proportion of total investment allocated to agriculture (Report of Bela Szalai to the Hungarian National Assembly, January 23, 1954). Elsewhere, the increase is more modest but nevertheless significant.

⁸ *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), November 6, 1953.

CHART XV

WORK TIME IN HOURS NEEDED TO PURCHASE*

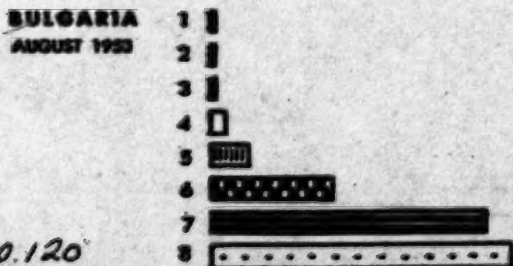
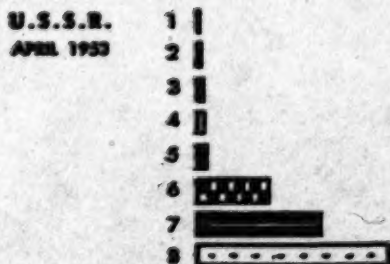
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1		POTATOES	1 Kg.	5		MILK	1 L.
2		CABBAGE	1 Kg.	6		SUGAR	1 Kg.
3		EGG	1 Ea.	7		PORK	1 Kg.
4		BREAD	1 Kg.	8		BUTTER	1 Kg.

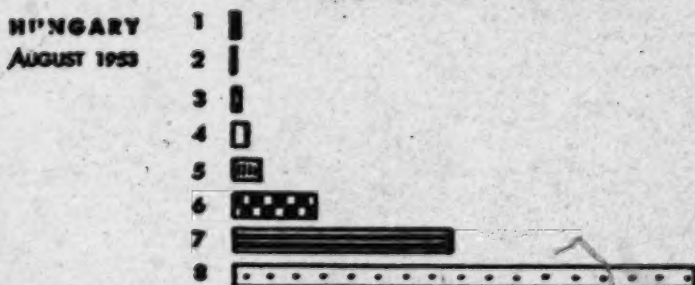
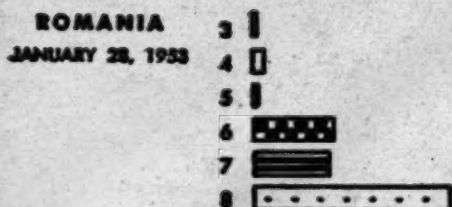
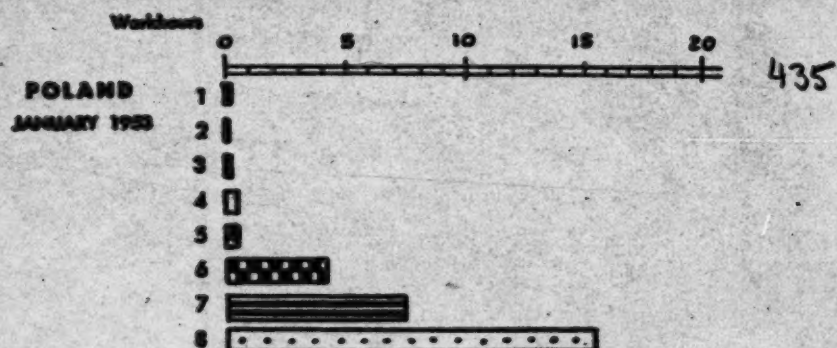
1 Kg = 2.2046 lbs.

1 L = 1.06 Qt.

Workhours



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* Official U. S. Government statistics.

** Post Currency Reform — Black Rye Bread (White Bread = 1.00)

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3. Consequently, the policy of collectivization, designed to insure a steady supply of goods to the cities without much payment in return, loses a large part of its meaning, and the collectivization drive itself is halted. While it is true that collectivized farming is still officially considered the highest form of agrarian organization,⁹ the revised economic plans of the Satellite regimes do not intend appreciable extension of the "Socialist sector." Indeed, the goal of increasing the standard of living precludes, for some time, the resumption of any Communist land offensive.

4. Similarly, the New Course has made something of an anomaly of the traditional practices of the Communist land offensive: the division of the peasantry into antagonistic groups, the discrimination against the independent peasantry as a whole, the compilation of "kulak lists." These techniques, which were so well adapted to the collectivization campaign, lose much of their meaning in the new atmosphere. Again and again Communist leaders admonish their bureaucracy to cease treating the peasant as an "enemy" and everywhere but in Bulgaria it is now openly declared that the independent peasantry must be relied upon for the major portion of the agricultural produce.¹⁰ Violent anti-kulak campaigns must also be relinquished as long as the regimes are interested in agricultural production and not merely in agricultural redistribution. Therefore, the post-Stalin regimes call for "limitation" of the "kulak" rather than his "elimination."¹¹

5. Since increased agricultural production is the urgent and immediate necessity, and since increased administrative force cannot be used to obtain it, incentives for the peasant must be broadened. Delivery quotas are reduced; delivery prices are increased; taxes and fees of all sorts are lowered; and arrears in many categories are canceled. The pattern is nowhere identical; but in each country most of the same devices were employed.

"We must understand," said Berman, [that the new policy] "is going to cost a large sum of money. If the peasant gets this money but doesn't get any goods for it, including those which he

⁹ See, for example, the Bierut speech at the 2nd Congress of the Polish Workers Party (PZPR), March 10, 1954.

¹⁰ "We shall not and must not force anybody to join agricultural cooperatives, and we also do not think that the private farmer represents our enemy, we consider him our ally" (Czechoslovak President Antonin Zapotocky, *Rude Pravo*, February 23, 1954).

¹¹ See, for example, Gheorghiu-Dej, *For a Lasting Peace*, November 6, 1953.

really wants . . . there will be no increase in [agricultural] production." Therefore, a dual policy of increased payment for agricultural goods and increased production of vitally needed farmers' commodities is instituted. 656
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6. An attempt is being made to redress the balance so far as the concentration of techniques is concerned. A vigorous effort to detach technicians from cities and urban industries and to send them to farms for whose direction and assistance they were ostensibly trained, is being made in conjunction with the new plan.¹³ This is true everywhere in the Soviet sphere, especially in Poland the USSR, and Romania.

7. If the New Course is designed partly to consolidate the existing agricultural structure, it must be revaluated in terms of long-range perspectives. Hence, those collective farms which have the least social stability and economic viability are permitted to return to the private sector. In Czechoslovakia, where some 40 per cent of the farms were not paying their own way, according to Premier Siroky, a small percentage of the farms were permitted to disband in the fall of 1953.¹⁴ In Yugoslavia, where hundreds of collectives in mountainous areas produced very little and served only as a drain on the State treasury, almost half of these farms have been dissolved since 1951.¹⁵ And in Hungary, where peasant dissatisfaction was so great that, even with a police-State normally equipped to handle discontent, it constituted an element of such basic instability that almost half of the collectivized households have left the "Socialist sector."¹⁶

Above all, the New Course represents an effort to stabilize and consolidate the system of relationships carved out by the East European regimes. The next few years are likely to witness a concentrated Communist effort to make a smoothly-functioning economic order out of the conquests already gained, rather than sweeping away present problems by posing future challenges, as they have done in the past.

The New Course does not, by any stretch of the imagination,

¹³ The program of reinforcing the technical assistance to the countryside has encountered considerable resistance from the technicians themselves, and, indeed, in the USSR, the government complains that many technicians who go to the countryside refuse to take their families with them, so convinced are they that the new assignments are temporary. (*Pravda*, November 27, 1953).

¹⁴ *Rude Pravo* (Prague), November 10, 1953.

¹⁵ *Borba* (Belgrade), February 29, 1953.

¹⁶ *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), December 31, 1953.

656 represent a repudiation of the agricultural organization pioneered
178 by the Soviet planners in the early 1930s and brought to Eastern
185 Europe in the late 1940s. The basic characteristics of this organiza-
423 tion cannot be abandoned without the most thoroughgoing re-
orientation of the whole economy. The New Course cannot there-
fore be compared with the New Economic Policy of early Soviet
history. The NEP was declared before the Soviet industrial and
bureaucratic system had been built, and a retreat to a relatively
free market system was possible. The New Course, on the other
hand, has been promulgated within the framework of an already
fully-elaborated industrial and bureaucratic system, and the regimes
can no longer rely upon the free market for agricultural produce.

Having built this social system and enclosed themselves within
it, the East European Communists have lost much of the freedom
of choice and flexibility which aided them so greatly in their post-
war assumption of power. Therefore, they are subject to the internal
laws of the system, and it is doubtful whether they can make a
success of their efforts to reorient its basic relationships. The
authoritarian order is well adapted to the leadership of a rapidly
expanding heavy industrial, semi-military economy, but it is badly
equipped to handle the problems of small-scale agriculture and
consumer demand. In nine months of operation, the New Course
has already made it clear that the greatest obstacle to stabilization
of the Stalinist social order comes from the social order itself, and
its voracious demands.¹⁸

Prior to the introduction of the New Course, it was widely
assumed that the East European Communist drive to emulate
Soviet achievements was inexorable, and required only time for
completion. In particular, it was assumed that the Satellite regimes
could not rest until collectivization was completed, as if the Com-
munists could not face themselves ideologically with one indepen-
dent farm remaining. But the events of 1953 have highlighted the
degree to which Communist agricultural policy has been, from the
start, conditioned by the bedrock economic needs of a developing
social structure, rather than by the abstract demands of rigid doc-
trine. Indeed, even the Soviets, whose collectivized agriculture had
attained the state of "near-perfection" and completion toward which

¹⁸ For an extensive discussion of internal bureaucratic resistance to the New Course see "The Bureaucracy Wavers," *News from Behind the Iron Curtain* (Free Europe Press, New York), January, 1953.

the East European Communists were striving, are in the process of readjusting the structure in line with the new political relationships. 658
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No doubt the present *modus vivendi* between the peasantry and the Communist regimes is precarious and unstable, at best an uneasy truce between essentially antagonistic social forces. But there is good reason to believe that the Communists are determined to keep this mid-way course for some time to come, with only minor wavering within the ranks. 423

3. "Salami Tactics" and the New Course 423

The development of East European Communism since World War II has been dominated by the pragmatic methods of "salami tactics," the theory expounded by Hungarian ex-Premier Rakosi, which justified pursuit of any social or economic program that reinforces Communist political power. The advocacy of land reform facilitated Communist absorption of the State machine in 1945-46, and therefore became approved Communist "agrarian policy." Similarly, since advocacy of a productive middle peasantry may help to facilitate Communist retention of power in 1953-54, it has become approved Communist "agrarian policy." At each stage, the Communists speak as if no other policy had ever been considered, and as if no other policy could possibly be.¹⁷ As always, however, their primary concern is with power, and their ideological pronouncements tailored to suit it. The New Course is a development very much within the spirit of the "salami tactics" philosophy.

The success and failure of Communist agriculture policy in Eastern Europe may be attributable to these same "salami tactics." This strategem of slow suffocation made possible the seizure of power under circumstances unsuited to "classic" revolutionary forms; and it was well suited to a political apparatus incapable of a frontal revolutionary attack. The policy of slow, piecemeal land collectivization made possible the extension of the "Socialist sector" at a pace which did not arouse the united antagonism of the peasantry at any one time, thus avoiding the type of militant resist-

¹⁷ See above 91-2 for a brief discussion of official explanations of change in policy. Considering the importance of changes in policy emphasis in 1953, it is remarkable that the Communists have made so few attempts to analyze their past performances. The official definition of "Socialism" itself was altered during 1953 (see Fogarasi, *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest), September-October, 1953), and to this date not a single Communist theoretician has acknowledged the fact.

423 ance to collectivization which only a party of the strong Soviet type could have withstood.

However, those factors which made "salami tactics" suitable for the seizure of power and the beginning of collectivization made them inappropriate for completion of the task and the final subjugation of the independent peasantry. These disadvantages may be summarized as follows:

423 1. Piecemeal collectivization encouraged a type of peasant
668 resistance which, it turned out, was more effective than Soviet peasant resistance. In the USSR collectivization took place so rapidly, and with such tremendous force, that the vast majority of peasants were already well enclosed within the "Socialist sector" by the time a full-scale counter-attack could be prepared. Leonard Hubbard, the English authority, described the Soviet victory in this way:

The struggle over collectivization ended distinctly in favour of the Soviet Government, unlike the conflict [between the Government and the peasantry] that brought War Communism to a close. The peasants were no longer able to starve the Government into yielding, because the Government had now created an efficient organisation for obtaining the foodstuffs necessary for subsistence of the urban and industrial population.¹⁸

While it is true that the Soviet peasantry, in retaliation, destroyed a good portion of the nation's livestock, their bargaining power was not improved as a result. The vital shipments of surplus grain were insured, and all means of resistance had been thoroughly destroyed. The famine of 1932-33, mainly affecting the grain-growing regions of Ukraine and South Russia, demonstrated beyond doubt that, in Hubbard's words, "if anybody was to starve, [the peasants] would be the first to do so."

423 In Eastern Europe, however, the slow, cautious collectivization
661 precluded the possibility of so calculated and brutal a policy. A sufficient proportion of the peasantry remained outside of the "Socialist sector" to wreak havoc with the Government's general economic plan. The East European regimes could not gain a strong enough position in relation to the peasantry to withstand the tremendous pressures which would be generated by rapid collectivization or a disastrous drought such as 1933. One poor harvest was, consequently, a sufficient jolt to destroy the entire rhythm of the

¹⁸ Leonard Hubbard, *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture*, London, 1939, p. 123.

Satellite industrial program. The outstanding case in point is, of course, Hungary, whose extremely poor harvest of 1952 provided the impetus which paved the way for the crisis of 1953.¹⁹ 423 668

2. The reliance upon slow economic strangulation rather than direct administrative force in collectivization inevitably meant greater reliance on the voluntary will of the peasantry than was necessary in the Soviet collectivization drive. Therefore, the regimes had to take some account of the individual tastes of the peasantry. The variety of intermediate types of collective, the special privileges granted kolkhoz members, reflect the Communist desire to soften the impact of collectivization.²⁰ The strenuous efforts made to demonstrate to the peasant the economic superiority of collectivism were also part of this effort.

This policy made collectivization possible but at the same time detracted from the very usefulness originally intended for the collectivized farms; that is, the effort to render the collectives attractive to the independent peasant (limited as they were) did not facilitate exploitation of the peasants which was their major economic justification. As was evident from the analysis presented in Chapter IV, the degree of exploitation of the "Socialist sector" was not much greater than the exploitation of the private sector. The difference was, in any case, smaller than that achieved in the Soviet Union, where a prolonged period of persuasion and intra-peasantry discrimination had been unnecessary.

4. *The East European Peasant*

Peasant resistance is a social force extremely difficult to measure either quantitatively or qualitatively. It expresses itself in many forms and guises, both in open revolt and passive resistance. This is partly because peasant sentiment rarely expresses itself in organizational form but more commonly in individual economic acts. In modern history, governments have found it difficult to elicit fanatical loyalty from the peasant; at best he is obedient. For the same reasons, the peasant has rarely been drawn into the organized revolutionary movements of the time. He has succumbed to few 565 829 668

¹⁹ There was, of course, other factors involved in the Hungarian agricultural crisis of 1953 (see above pp. 109-10).

²⁰ Mention should be made here of Communist efforts throughout the sphere to flatter the peasant by a superficial glorification of his traditional dance, costumes, handiwork, and other expressions of the peasant culture which once graced the covers of pre-World War II East European tourist guides.

565 of the sophisticated slogans of modern politics and tends to judge
 829 governments in terms of provincial and pragmatic considerations
 668 which cannot be encompassed in the romantic slogans of either
 the State or the Revolution. For a fleeting moment in 1917, the
 peasants of Russia involved themselves in the maelstrom of a pro-
 letarian revolution. Between the wars they gave occasional support
 to genuinely peasant parties, but invariably their interest lagged
 or the parties betrayed them. Otherwise, the peasants have in
 general been passive rather than active participants in 20th Century
 political history.

The vast uprising of the Russian peasants in 1917-18 was prob-
 ably their greatest show of strength in the 20th century, and
 certainly absorbed more peasant energies and resentments than
 either the 1907 Romanian rebellion or the Bulgarian peasant vic-
 tories of the early 1920s. But their victory was short-lived, and
 was achieved at a tremendous price. The cataclysmic forces of the
 Russian Revolution so shattered the old structure of both country-
 side and city that the gains the peasant made remained at the
 mercy of terrible forces. The destruction of traditional institutions
 which occurred in 1917-21 in defense of the Revolution prepared
 the land for the collectivization onslaught 10 years later.

The peasants of Eastern Europe have not participated in such
 a revolution, and their institutions knew no such cataclysmic over-
 turn. Furthermore, East European peasants have had a longer tradi-
 tion of private property and as a result were less capable of
 revolutionary opposition to their oppressors but more capable of
 that type of passive resistance which in the long run is most effec-
 tive. Russian peasants might destroy the livestock in defiance of the
 Bolshevik cadres but East European peasants could more easily
 sabotage the plan by day-to-day non-cooperation. The revolutionary
 traditions of the Russian peasantry made possible greater heroism,
 but no greater improvement of their economic situation. The less
 militant traditions of the East European peasantry (in part the
 consequence of more humane governments) guaranteed that there
 would be no repetition of the victories of 1917-18, nor any exact
 repetition of the terrible defeats of 1929-32.

There are many national factors affecting the total picture:
 the proximity of peasant victory in Hungary of 1945-46; the power
 of the Catholic Church in rural Poland; the relative prosperity of
 the Czech farmers; the communal traditions of the Bulgarian and

Yugoslav peasants; the special position which Romania occupies in the Soviet empire. These differences are important, and explain many of the variations within the framework of agricultural policy. But these variations fall into that historical experience which distinguishes East European peasantry from its Russian counterpart. These historical differences are of the utmost importance in explaining the failure of the East European Communists to emulate successfully the Soviet example.

5. *The Communist Role in Eastern Europe*

The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe consider themselves progressive forces of the area. In agriculture, they assert that by lifting the backward peasantry out of its traditional lethargy and provincialism, they are performing a service for the peasants and the entire society. The opposition of the peasantry to Communist plans for the rationalization of the land stems from stubborn allegiance to outmoded customs and habits. Vulko Chervenkov, the Bulgarian Premier, gave the classical formulations on this point:

The Bulgarian peasant has two souls. One is the love of work and the other is the sense of private ownership. His spirit of private ownership brings him close to the capitalist. His spirit of work brings him close to the working class. Therefore the peasant is hesitant. We Communists, through our tactics and by the collective method, should kill their spirit of private ownership and build our socialist world.¹⁹

It is precisely this conception of the Communist role in Eastern Europe which the material gathered together here calls into question.

No doubt it is partly true that peasant resistance to collectivization is based on their passionate attachment to the land they till and own. But as has been pointed out, the major issue in the struggle between the Communists and the peasants was the question of the *distribution* of the fruits of the land, rather than the more abstract question of conflicting ideologies.

The peasants fight not only to protect their ancient traditions but even more to protect their economic rights, and they frequently employ the ancient traditions in defense of their own economic interests. The Communists, for their part, struggle against these traditions not merely out of doctrinaire antagonism but because these customs stand in the way of further exploitation of the

¹⁹ *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) September 9, 1953.

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829 peasants and their full incorporation into the state-industrial machinery.²²

423 Like the great land reforms which followed the First and Second World Wars, the Communist "solution" to the land problem of Eastern Europe is no real solution at all, and since it does not attack the problem at its roots, is not intended to be one. Rather, like the great reforms, the Communist agricultural program is only a means of redistributing the products of the land to suit new political realities. The chief difference between the two movements lies in the fact that while the reforms redistributed the wealth among the peasants themselves, collectivization was designed to redistribute a portion of the national wealth in favor of the new urban Communist bureaucratic class.

²² The working class has been already incorporated into that structure. But that does not mean that, despite the absence of traditional ties, they are any less opposed to the Communist regimes than the peasants. On the contrary, as the East German and Czechoslovak revolts of mid-1953 demonstrated, the workers are likely to play the leading role in anti-Communist agitation and revolt.